

IDENTIFYING AND OVERCOMING OBSTACLES FACED BY BI-VOCATIONAL
EXPOSITORY PREACHERS

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To Pamela, who pushed me to “Go and write,” intelligent, lover of God, quintessential
pastor’s wife.

To my three lovely daughters, Emily, Catlin, and Clare, who inspire me with their
passion for learning.

To my son, Jack, who prayed for me.

And to bi-vocational pastors everywhere who devote themselves to preaching the Word.

Acts 18:1-5

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ABSTRACT

Bi-vocational preaching pastors are tentmakers working to leverage their efforts for ministry in the local church. But these pastors have less time for expository sermon preparation and face challenges that other pastors do not encounter. This thesis-project provides a tool for identifying challenges in the sermon development process and helps design a strategy to overcome them and aid pastors in keeping the Word of God central in their ministry.

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM AND SETTING

Bi-vocational pastors trained to prepare biblical expository sermons face all the ministerial duties of full-time pastors with the added pressures of a second job. Biblical expositors are committed to keeping the Scriptures central in the life and worship of the congregation as they echo God's voice of truth placing high value on the Word of God. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones exalted the value of the expository sermon:" This is essential, this is vital; as I have said, all preaching must be expository." ¹

Biblical expository sermons come with a set of demands that require a particular effort that other sermons do not ask. Expository preaching is rigorous preaching that requires the preacher to be exact. John MacArthur notes, "Applying this idea to preaching requires that an expositor be one who explains Scripture by laying open the text to public view in order to set forth its meaning, explain what is difficult to understand, and make appropriate application."² Haddon Robinson defines expository preaching as "the communication of a Biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through him to his hearers."³ This endeavor entails hard, holy work, and that requires dedicated time. While all biblical preaching calls for prayerful scholarship the work of the expository preacher has historically required more study than topical or textual approach

¹. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1971), 75.

². John MacArthur, *Rediscovering Expository Preaching* (Dallas, TX: Word, 1992), 334-35.

³. Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001), 20.

due to the technical work required. The historical-grammatical, literary analysis of the text in its context including canon, testament, book, passage, and sentence make a demand upon the preacher that is more involved. Quality expository preaching makes additional time demands on preachers that other sermons do not ask.

According to Ed Stetzer, vice president of research and statistics at Life Way Christian Resources, statistics reveal that more pastors are becoming bi-vocational, a trend that has particular implications for the preaching pastor who is an expositor. Reasons for the increase in bi-vocational ministry include the cost of living when part-time salaries are not sufficient. Low church attendance trends may mean more congregations will not be able to afford a full-time pastor. Another development is that some pastors want to retain a second career due to the fear of being terminated at their part-time church or in the event the church cannot pay them.⁴ The Southern Baptist Convention, a leader in promoting and supporting bi-vocational pastors, reports that 75 percent of their churches run under one hundred people, and many of these churches employ bi-vocational pastors. The Nazarene Church reports that about 40 percent of their ministers are bi-vocational.⁵ The demands of two or more jobs, financial limitations of fledgling churches, incessant sermon preparation (no less demanding than for full-time pastors), administrative duties, counseling loads, comparatively fewer pulpit breaks due to limited resources, can limit sermon preparation time and increase stressors. These conditions can heighten frustration, lead to burn out, drop out, or get out of ministry scenarios. Even the highly committed pastor can become over-extended when an entire parish or an individual member goes through a difficult trial. Add a demanding season in

⁴. Ed Stetzer: *Pastoral Care, Inc.*, accessed January 17, 2019, www.pastoralcareinc.com.

⁵. Stetzer, *Pastoral Care, Inc.*

ministry to the already existing time constraints of bi-vocational ministry and it can make fashioning a biblical expository sermon seem unobtainable when a second job and church ministry become seemingly nonstop with the Sunday sermon fast approaching. It is important to understand that expository preaching is a particular type of preaching that requires a significant time commitment. Few bi-vocational pastors have the opportunity to employ a “planned neglect” preaching strategy like John MacArthur, who says, “I plan to neglect everything else until my studying is done. I set aside Wednesday, Thursday and Friday to prepare for my Sunday messages. Not until I have accomplished what I need to on those days do I then stop and care for other matters.”⁶

In my pastorate I have struggled to keep expository preaching central because the bi-vocational split of working a second job, as well as pastoral ministry and preaching, has at times felt like a boxing match between two heavyweight contenders, leading to a draw with no clear winner. Particular conditions in New England, my ministry setting, pose high hurdles for this region’s bi-vocational minister. Here the cost of housing, living, and utilities is third highest in the country, people in the North East give the least amount of their income to charity, and we find the greatest percentage of unchurched adults in the United States, sporting the highest level of biblical illiteracy.⁷ This climate amplifies the stressors on the bi-vocational pastor. While much of the literature for bi-vocational pastors addresses pastoral self-care, seemingly little focuses on the need for “pulpit-care,” or how the use of time, energy, and homiletical skill are employed to create optimal conditions for producing a sustainable ministry of biblical expository preaching. With these trends and obstacles, this thesis asks the following research question: Can

⁶ MacArthur, *Rediscovering Expository Preaching*, 335.

⁷ Gallup News Service –*Religion*, Frank Newport, April 27, 2006, Gallup Poll.

time-challenged bi-vocational pastors employ a strategy to ensure faithful expository sermons that feed the flock of God while minimizing stagnation, burnout, and weak theology? It is my hope that the resultant strategy will help supply a bromide for bi-vocational challenges while enhancing the spiritual maturation of the congregation through preaching the whole counsel of God. The goal of this applied thesis project will be to develop a comprehensive Bi-vocational Preaching Strategy Tool (BPST) that will generate data for the crafting of a preaching strategy that will enhance quality sermon preparation by the bi-vocational pastor. The ultimate goal of the preaching strategy tool is a holistic preaching strategy to ensure biblical expository preaching that keeps the main thing the main thing. The BPST will also include a useful plan for self-monitoring that can be adapted and refreshed when ministry conditions change.

Four areas of biblical theology provide the theological framework for this thesis-project on preaching: inspiration, preaching, pastoral ministry, and work. The first area is the theology of inspiration which begins with the Word of God as the ultimate authority, God's authority, over us. This Word must be proclaimed not in the power of human wisdom but the power of the Holy Spirit because it is God-breathed, inspired by God the Holy Spirit, and as such carries divine authority unlike any other authority we have. Biblical preaching holds to the truth that God Himself addresses us in preaching. The Scriptures are inspired by God so the biblical expositor comes to the task with God's divine authority because the Scriptures are inspired by God. The main reason to keep the Scriptures central in the life and worship of the congregation is the inherent authority and divine inspiration of the Scriptures. Nothing else should supplant its place in the life and heart of the church, but this value must be intentionally maintained.

The second of area of theology addressed in this thesis-project is the theology of preaching. Those who receive the biblical charge to preach receive the command to become speakers of God's Word. This call is central to the purpose of the church. Walter Kaiser comments, "Regardless of what new directives and emphases are periodically offered, that which is needed above everything else to make the church more viable, authentic and effective, is a new declaration of the scriptures with a new purpose, passion and power."⁸ Sinners cannot be saved without God's Word, and preaching is central to the salvation of all people. "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?" (Rom 10:14). The primary Greek form of the word *preach* (*kerusso*) reveals its intrinsic rootage in the kerygma—the gospel itself.

Preaching is an inescapable theological act, for the preacher dares to speak of God and in a very real sense, for God. A theology of preaching should take Trinitarian form, reflecting the very nature of the self-revealing God. It gives witness to the God who speaks, the Son who saves, and the Spirit who illuminates.⁹

The third aspect of theology this thesis-project will address is pastoral theology. Lloyd-Jones understood that "preaching is the primary task of the Church and therefore of the minister of the church, everything is subsidiary to this, and can be represented as the outworking or the carrying out of this daily practice."¹⁰ Pastors and their preaching require a vulnerable dependence upon God. Pastors are called to be spiritual, literate, and

⁸. Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Towards an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1981), quoted in John MacArthur, *Rediscovering Expository Preaching* (Dallas, TX: Word, 1992), 7.

⁹. Albert Mohler, *A Theology of Preaching: Handbook of Contemporary Preaching*, ed. Michael Duduit (Nashville, TN: Broadman Holman, 1992), chap. 1, 13-14.

¹⁰. Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, 27.

a communicator of spiritual things. This calling must come from God or God's authority will not be present in their ministry.

The central mandate for pastors to teach and preach the Word of God is well represented in the New Testament, but for the bi-vocational pastor it comes with unique challenges.

Lastly, I will examine a theology of work as it relates to the bi-vocational preaching pastor. In the examining a theology of work I will outline a biblical perspective integral to understanding *both jobs* (emphasis mine) of the bi-vocational preaching pastor as part of a larger, robust theology of Christian calling. As human beings we have been designed to rest and play but also to work. bi-vocational pastors can identify with and be a role model to the majority of Christians in that "98% of the Christians who are not in church paid work are, on a whole not equipped or envisioned for mission in 95 % of their waking lives."¹¹ In other words, people spend most of their time working, once you add up activities in the home, in the workplace, and elsewhere. If we do not teach people to view their work, and the whole economic sphere of activity, as integral to the way God wants them to live, Christianity is reduced from a full-time way of life to nothing more than a leisure activity. Our walk with Jesus becomes something we squeeze into our schedules when we are not working."¹² As human beings, we were designed by the Creator not only to rest and to play but also to work. "Humans are uniquely designed by God to exercise dominion over creation, which is a divinely delegated stewardship role,

¹¹. Mark Greene, "Mark Greene at Lausanne Conference 2010" (London Institute Contemporary Christianity, 2010).

¹². Thomas Nelson, *The Pastor's Guide to Fruitful Work and Economic Wisdom: Understanding What Your People Do All Day*, Oikonomia Series (Grand Rapids, Acton Institute Christian Library Press, 2012), 7.

and humans are designed by God to be His image bearers, to uniquely reflect who God is to His good world.”¹³ Yet after the fall, there is an indication that a change in the purpose and perspective on work was significantly impacted by sin. Jesus’ parable of the rich fool in Luke 12:13-21 teaches us that work only for the sake of personal gain lacks kingdom perspective. And while Woody Allen said, Showing up is 80 percent of life,”¹⁴ God’s original plan is so much more and the tells the other person; “I am a pastor”; the person then responds something like this, “That indicates that work be part of the economy or design of God” (Gen 1:26-31). That we are blessed to be a blessing in God’s design, was God’s intention (Gen 12). We are not called to work just for remuneration (to earn a living) but to contribute (love our neighbor) and be a reflection of God’s image (give glory to God). So, if we work two jobs should one job be more important than the other? Most pastors have experienced the reaction of people when they are asked what they do for a living, ‘That must be a really rewarding calling.’ But what about that person’s job? And the bi-vocational pastor’s second job? Should they be rewarding? If they are in less than full-time ministry is it less rewarding? How is our bifurcated vocation and calling understood in light of Paul’s teaching, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men” (Col 3:23-24)?

Tom Nelson notes that “dualism, put simply, is wrongly dividing something that should not be divided. This too often takes place in our work when we wrongly distinguish one type of work from another, placing value on some types of work at the expense of others, we fall into a distortion of work dualism. Work dualism sees through a

¹³. Tom Nelson, *Work Matters: Connecting Sunday Worship to Monday Work* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 201), 21.

¹⁴. Fred R. Shapiro, ed., Woody Allen, *Yale Book of Quotations* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006.)

bifurcated lens in the form of a two-story world. The upper story is higher vocational calling, one devoted to the church or religious, sacred work. The lower story is viewed as a lower vocational calling, one dedicated to secular work.”¹⁵ This distortion is easily perpetrated and can devalue any secular employment as well as excuse less than honorable service to the overwhelming majority of Christians who are not employed in full-time Christian ministry. And what of the bi-vocational pastor’s view of his secondary work that is typically secular? How does one be a good steward of the second job and keep preaching central in the ministry of the church? Paul exhorted Timothy with a strong reminder to “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth” (2 Tim 2:15). The care and accuracy of dividing the Word of God is of utmost importance to combat error, thwart false teachers, and feed the flock of God. Lloyd-Jones highlights the importance of the expository sermon as a worthy objective of the preacher: “This is essential, this is vital; as I have said, all preaching must be expository.”¹⁶ True expository preaching is centered in the text but will demand our best work if we are to nourish the flock of God. But the “other job” demands our excellence as well.

The literature review in chapter 3 will give a summary of the significant works in each area related to bi-vocational expository preachers: preaching, bi-vocational ministry, pastoral self-care, and a theology of work. Each area will be introduced with a description of the category and its relationship to the thesis work and will contain authors that are main sources, as well as contributors who have influenced the thesis and the resultant project design and Bi-vocational Preaching Strategy Tool (BPST) in chapters 4 and 5.

¹⁵. Nelson, *Work Matters*, 44.

¹⁶. Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, 19.

Chapter 4 will provide an overview of the BPST and its design that will be used for crafting an intentional strategy for keeping biblical expository sermons central to the ministry of the church. Chapter 5 will present the methodology used in developing the Bi-vocational Preaching Strategy Tool, field testing, and the results, as well as recommendations for future use.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Bi-vocational pastors, whether church planters, ministers of small churches, or ones attempting to revitalize a historic congregation, prepare sermons with the regularity of full-time pastors to feed the flock entrusted to their care. It is my conviction that biblical expository sermons provide the most consistent way to feed and nourish the spiritual life of a congregation. While other types of sermons can be valuable, even necessary, Bible-centered expository messages that diligently unpack the whole counsel of God's Word are the most effective in developing a week-by-week, sustainable ministry of spiritual maturation. This is particularly relevant in a day like ours, when a biblical worldview is in the minority and there is a scriptural famine in the land.

Yet, for bi-vocational pastors to commit to expository biblical preaching requires more than hard work, because they face unique challenges of time, energy, and focus. It requires a conscious plan of action designed to achieve maximum use of skill and methodology to develop a coherent plan of action. The exegetical, historical-grammatical toil needed to draw out the meaning of the text and apply it to today's world will take a special commitment of effort and duration (few can produce an expository sermon at one sitting). The bi-vocational preacher, short on time and staff, and long on other pastoral and second-job duties, will benefit from a preaching strategy that is committed to keeping biblical expository preaching central to feed God's flock.

The larger framework for this thesis project is one of biblical theology, a discipline that takes its place alongside, and in relationship to, other disciplines such as

systematic theology, historical theology, and apologetics. It is a particular theology that is important to expositors because it addresses the metanarrative of the Scriptures from beginning to end.

The term biblical theology seems to have been used first in the mid-seventeenth century, in deliberate contrast to scholastic theology. Biblical theology, as its name implies, was intended to refer to a theology based on the Bible, as distinct from a theology that consisted largely of philosophical ideas and religious traditions. Inductively from various texts of the Bible, biblical theology seeks to identify and communicate the unity of all the biblical texts, using the various genres of those writings themselves. In this sense, it is canonical biblical theology, “whole-Bible” biblical theology; it is a theology of the whole Bible, not a theology that simply has roots in the Bible or merely takes the Bible as the place to begin. Biblical theology makes an argument and gives us reasons to preach from the Word of God rather than other sources. Biblical theology is concerned with the teachings of the various authors, the genres of Scripture and how these reveal the development of redemption in Scripture, while systematic theology is the topical study of a subject throughout the Bible. This contrast in some ways illustrates the difference between expository and topical sermons. Biblical theology exposes the thread of redemption that is woven through all of Scripture and more closely follows the storyline of Scripture. While topical sermons can be biblical in every sense they are more thematic and do not have continuous attention of one text, context, canon, and the intended message of an author.

Three specific areas of biblical theology provide the framework of this thesis-project for bi-vocational preachers committed to keeping the Word of God central in the

ministry of the church: a theology of inspiration that elucidates the authority of the Bible, a theology of preaching whose methodology aims to expound the Bible, and a theology of bi-vocational pastoring that addresses the practice of ministry.

Theology of Inspiration

The first area of biblical theology this chapter will cover is the doctrine of inspiration. The Bible is many things, but it is first God's inspired Word. It is God's Word to us, through human means. As one theologian notes, "Inspiration can be understood either as dictation or as a stimulus. In the first case, the person is a tool without a will of its own; in the second case, the person inspired is the object of personal claim."¹ I believe the later, where the Scriptures are not dictated to the human vessel as if they were automatons but rather willing, cooperative, yet submissive agents of a Holy God. Classical orthodox Christians subscribe to inspiration, as it relates to the Bible, as having divine origin. The ultimate source of a divinely inspired Bible is God himself, for the Scriptures are breathed (inspired) by him (2 Tim 3:16; see also Matt 4:4). "Scripture does not originate from human impulse, for prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet 1:20-21).² The Scriptures are a written authority that deals with the written text of Scripture; it is the *grapha* (writings) of the prophets that are inspired (2 Tim 3:16). The phrase "it is written" (cf. Matt 4:4, 7, 10) reveals that the focus of God's authority for his people was in his written Word. Biblical expository preaching by its very description aims at

¹. Wilfried Härle, *Outline of Christian Doctrine: An Evangelical Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 96.

². Norman L. Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1: *Introduction, Bible* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2002), 239.

exposing to the listener the divine authority it bears and the calling it exerts. As Wayne Grudem explains, “The essence of the authority of Scripture is its ability to compel us to believe and to obey it and to make such belief and obedience equivalent to believing and obeying God Himself.”³ In the pulpit, the sermon’s authority is ultimately exposed as human or divine. As Sidney Greidanus notes, “The necessity of expository preaching shows itself most clearly when the question of authority is raised. By whose authority do preachers preach? Whose word do they bring? If preachers preach their own word, the congregation may listen politely but has every right to disregard the sermon as just another person’s opinion.”⁴ The authority of the sermon is ultimately derived from a reliance on self or on God. “Accordingly, if preachers wish to preach with divine authority, they must proclaim the message of the inspired scriptures.”⁵ This thesis is founded on the conviction that expository preaching does this best. It aims to unleash the authority of the text from the text, not the preacher or a string of disjointed biblical verses.

But the authority of the church rather than the authority of Scripture asserted itself and became the center of the debate during the Protestant Reformation. Five Latin words highlighted the distinctions between the early Reformers and the Roman Catholic Church when it came to the issue of authority. The word *sola* is the Latin word for “only” and was used in relation to five key teachings that defined the biblical pleas of Protestants:

1. *Sola scriptura*: “Scripture alone”

³. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 82.

⁴. Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 12.

⁵. Greidanus, *Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text*, 12.

2. *Sola fide*: “faith alone”
3. *Sola gratia*: “grace alone”
4. *Solo Christo*: “Christ alone”
5. *Soli Deo gloria*: “to the glory of God alone”

We will concern ourselves with only the first and best known of these, *sola Scriptura*, as it relates to inspiration and authority of Scripture. John MacArthur comments, “The Reformation principle of *Sola Scriptura* has to do with the sufficiency of Scripture as our supreme authority in all spiritual matters. *Sola Scriptura* simply means that all truth necessary for our salvation and spiritual life is taught either explicitly or implicitly in Scripture. It is not a claim that all truth of every kind is found in Scripture.”⁶ Scripture is therefore the perfect and only standard of spiritual truth, revealing infallibly all that we must believe in order to be saved and all that we must do in order to glorify God. That—no more, no less—is what *sola Scriptura* means. The Westminster Confession of Faith declares, “The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man’s salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men.”⁷

However, having asserted my theological stance regarding inspiration, I do not assume that the authority of Scripture, its inspiration, and continuity in the church has been without debate throughout church history. In fact, much of the discord among the

⁶. John MacArthur, “What Does *Sola Scriptura* Mean?”, August 7, 2015, Ligonier Ministries, accessed November 9, 2016, <http://www.ligonier.org/blog/what-does-sola-scriptura-mean/>.

⁷. *The Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, The Shorter Catechism* (Lawrenceville, GA: PCA Publications, 2005), 357.

Protestant, Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox branches of Christendom has been centered on the authority of the Scriptures. To understand the watershed events of the Protestant Reformation is to understand the status that *sola Scriptura* was given by the Reformers. It did not replace the gospel or Christ himself but makes clear that the chief authority of the church that worships and adores Christ and preaches his gospel of the kingdom comes from the Scriptures alone and not from infallible men, magisterium, and councils. R. C. Sproul notes,

It was because popes could and did err and because councils could and did err that Luther came to realize the supremacy of Scripture. Luther did not despise church authority nor did he repudiate church councils as having no value. His praise of the Council of Nicea is noteworthy. Luther and the reformers did not mean by *Sola Scriptura* that the Bible is the only authority in the church. Rather, they meant that the Bible is the only infallible authority in the church.⁸

Sproul explains,” Inspiration is crucial to the authority of the Word of God and to the preaching moment because inspiration is what gives the Scriptures divine authority.

Sproul, a student of the Reformation, also notes, “The process of inspiration did not make the biblical writers automatons, for their books reveal differences of vocabulary, style, and other matters of variation between one human author and another. But inspiration did overcome any tendency they may have had to error, with the result that the words they wrote were precisely what God, the divine author intended us to have.”⁹

A central biblical text in the doctrine of inspiration is 2 Tim 3:16, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.”¹⁰ The primary word in the verse is θεόπνευστος (*theopneustos*) and is at

⁸. R. C. Sproul, *Scripture Alone: The Evangelical Doctrine*, R. C. Sproul Library (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2005), 17.

⁹. Sproul, *Scripture Alone*, 135.

¹⁰. All Scripture citations, unless otherwise noted, are from the New International Version.

the center of most discussions. This word is commonly translated “inspired by God.” It means literally “God-breathed,” as the New International Version translates it, and is the pivotal concept in the doctrine of inspiration. God, according to 2 Timothy, has breathed out his Word on human beings rather than breathing into them some inspired power. But this is how the divine word came to the writers. It is God-breathed, divinely generated with its only source being God not human. Thus, the Bible, though it is a human book, insofar as it is written by human writers, has its humanity transcended by virtue of its divine origin and inspiration.¹¹ Biblical expository sermons aim to reveal that authority.

Theology of Preaching

The second area of biblical theology that affects the framework of this thesis is the theology of preaching. Preaching is a unique form of communication that has found many sources of authority over the centuries, including the personality, education, methods, feelings, interests, and whims of the preacher. Many sermons have been aimed at gaining and keeping an audience, and that has motivated many preachers to search for an authority that will assure them they can gather listeners. But as John Stott once asked, “In a world which seems either unwilling or unable to listen, how can we be persuaded to go on preaching, and learn to do so effectively? The essential secret is not mastering certain techniques but being mastered by certain convictions. In other words, theology is more important than methodology.”¹²

¹¹. Sproul, *Scripture Alone*, 140.

¹². John R. W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 92.

Expository sermons are part of what Haddon Robinson calls “a living process. Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through him to his hearers.”¹³ Central to a theology of preaching, and my perspective, is a desire to keep the Word of God central in pastoral ministry, with a commitment to biblical expository preaching. Today, expository preaching can find its proponents even amid western culture that has lost its reverence for God. Yet, expository preaching still needs advocates. Expository sermons have as their goal that the divine authority of the text be revealed as the text determines the main points of the sermon.

Timothy Keller, a key proponent of expository preaching, suggests that expository preaching points to, and immerses the preacher in, the inspired text and less on the topical selections and preferred themes of the preacher. Keller recommends the expository method as one that is more likely to preach faithfully the Word and defines the method in hopes of giving us a manifesto. He says,

There are many good books that describe in detail how to write and deliver an expository message on the text of the Bible. A survey of dozens of these—some very old, and some brand new—reveals a surprising consensus of method. When you organize those top-level points of agreement, you’re left with a very helpful set of irreducible essentials on how to preach a sound expository sermon. Though the sources call for varying steps and stages, they all include following four directives in one form or another:

1. Discuss the goal of the text by itemizing all the things that it says and looking for the main idea that all other ideas support.
2. Choose a main theme for the sermon that presents the central idea of the text and ministers to your specific listeners.
3. Develop an outline around the sermon theme that fits the passage, with each point raising insights from the text itself, and has movement toward a climax.

¹³. Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1980), 20.

4. Flesh out each point with arguments, illustrations, examples, images, other supportive Bible texts, and, more important, practical application.¹⁴

Despite a recent resurgence of expository preaching, conventional wisdom is to preach topical and/or motivational sermons, so that preachers may still require convincing that the labor expended on expository sermons will produce results. Bi-vocational preaching pastors may be more enamored with topical preaching based on the assumption that expository preaching takes more training and time to produce and the benefits are not guaranteed. It is the case that preparation of this sermon for the pulpit is not easy. It requires time, self-conquest, and hard work. Laziness is not compatible with pastoral ministry and is a particular enemy of the expositor. Yet, preachers surrounded by topical preaching may be challenged to yield and conform to that method because they may not see the value in the hard study needed to expose the biblical concept in the text. This may come in the form of nagging thoughts like this one echoed by Walter Kaiser: “Maybe Bible exposition doesn’t work anymore in today’s ministry context. Maybe I should get onboard the topical teaching train.”¹⁵ The impact, influence, and success of topical preachers like Rick Warren of Saddleback Church are significant, as Pelton shows:

Rick Warren radically changed his preaching style when he began his ministry in California. In preparing to plant Saddleback Community Church, Warren reviewed the messages he preached in the previous ten years as a Southern Baptist evangelist. Using the criteria, “Would this make sense to a totally un-churched person?” he threw out all but two sermons. Warren concluded, “If I was going to

¹⁴. Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* (New York, NY: Penguin Random House, 2015), 213-15.

¹⁵. Walter C. Kaiser Jr., quoted in Randal E. Pelton, *Preaching with Accuracy: Finding Christ-Centered Big Ideas for Biblical Preaching*, Preaching With (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2014), 24.

start a church by attracting hardcore pagans, it would have to be a message to which they could relate.”¹⁶

The size of Saddleback and the popularity of Warren may make a case for topical preaching. Warren’s sermons are constructed using a variety of biblical passages (or single verses) to support one main subject or topic.

However, the danger of the topical method is that topical sermons are not always developed by someone who is as gifted and creative as Warren. I believe that as long as we stay faithful to the text we can and will see lives transformed. And the argument can be made that the greatest of all sermons, the Sermon on the Mount, given by Jesus was a topical sermon. But that being said, He is the Living Word, and the topical sermon given by preachers today is more dependent upon the preacher’s talent and ability to construct a cohesive thesis from a multitude of texts than an expository sermon that exposes the inherent divine authority resident within the one passage constructed by the Holy Spirit. I am sold out on expository sermons simply because the Bible text is the topic and support materials are used to clarify and explain it. Topical sermons start with the topic and Bible texts are used to support it. The primary starting point in expository sermons is always God’s Word. Accurate, biblical, theological, expository sermons may in fact release the power and work of the Holy Spirit in a way that the topical sermon cannot. If the gold is found in the text, it makes the most sense to mine the text in a way that will maximize the yield. Kaiser critiques topical preaching saying, “To be sure, the church has had more than her rightful share of ‘mediations’ or ‘topical sermons’ which are loosely connected

¹⁶. Pelton, *Preaching with Accuracy*, 24.

with a Biblical phrase, clause, sentence, verse, or scattered assortment thereof.”¹⁷ Often expository sermons are accused of leaving a gap between the historical, grammatical, cultural, and critical analysis of the text to the relevant, contemporary needs of the hearers. But this is a matter of ensuring proper exegesis of the text and then applying it for the audience. There is no inherent contradiction that says the biblical text cannot be practically applied by the preacher. The Word of God has its own authority, and that message is to be delivered accurately and clearly and then applied with practical claims.

I would assert that topical preaching is not wrong or incorrect, yet it is not as likely to draw out the full meaning of the text because it does not consistently stay in one text. Despite my critique of topical preaching it can effectively communicate the gospel in profound ways and can be used to inspire congregations when a comprehensive treaty of a subject is in order. It is a worthy complement to the expository sermon. Conversely, expository preaching is criticized for being boring and dry and the sermon may become a verse-by-verse discourse on exegesis with little application to our world. That said, the topical approach to sermon crafting requires more human decision making in weaving connecting affiliated texts to create a unified topic. Expository preaching, by contrast, is already steeped in the canon, genre, context, text, and pericope with a unified meaning inspired and given by the Holy Spirit. The power is in the biblical text, and the faithful expositor can draw out and expound the passage in as comprehensive and accurate way as possible to feed the congregation. Topical sermons, while they have value, may in the long run be less accurate and less nourishing for the believer, because they are developing an entirely new context into which truth is poured. Expository preachers have

¹⁷. Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981), 18.

the text, context, genre, and canon before them and do not need to construct a new framework from which to preach. This should produce greater accuracy and authority. If faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God, preaching that consistently brings the message of Scripture in concert with the specific genre, book, and text that God revealed through his prophets and apostles is a word from God that more closely and authoritatively encourages a life of faith. It follows that bi-vocational preaching pastors must be faithfully stewarding the pulpit to avoid shortcuts and ensure that God's Word is not masked, diluted, or changed. Preaching expository sermons bring us closest to unpacking the whole counsel of God for all the people of God, a counsel that is sufficient for all we need to know for faith, salvation, and obedience.

The Protestant Reformation suggested that the heart of worship is the unapologetic preaching of God's Word. Yet, historically, the more liturgical churches have argued that the sacraments form the heart of worship with the Lord's Supper and water baptism representing the gospel best. And some evangelical churches have focused on other components in worship such as music, evangelism, and the ordinances. Yet, Albert Mohler affirms, "Expository preaching is central, irreducible and non-negotiable to the Bible's mission of authentic worship that satisfies God. John Stott's simple declaration states the issue boldly, 'Preaching is indispensable to Christianity.' More specifically, preaching is indispensable to Christian worship—and not only indispensable but central."¹⁸ To allow other agendas to usurp the primary focus on the teaching and preaching of the Word of God in our worship services is to minimize worship.

Historically, the preachers with the greatest impact were biblical expositors who were

¹⁸. Albert Mohler, "Expository Preaching—The Antidote to Anemic Preaching," August 2013, accessed November 9, 2016, [albertmohler.com, expository-preaching-the-antidote-to-anemic-worship](http://albertmohler.com/expository-preaching-the-antidote-to-anemic-worship).

used of God to unleash the power of his Word to ensure that the clear authority of God's voice would be heard. Prominent expositors of the modern church including A. T. Robertson, Alexander Maclaren, Jonathan Edwards, and John Piper have been instrumental in sparking revivals and great spiritual depth in their congregations. While biblical preaching includes topical, textual, and expository methods, each with advocates, today's church has a far greater concern: the reduced importance of preaching in general. In his opening chapter, "The Primacy of Preaching," from *Feed My Sheep: A Passionate Plea for Preaching*, Mohler remarks:

Evangelical pastors commonly state that biblical preaching is the hallmark of their calling. Nevertheless, a careful observer might come to a very different conclusion. The priority of preaching is simply not evident in far too many churches.

We must affirm with Luther that the preaching of the Word is the first essential mark of the church. Luther believed so strongly in the centrality of preaching that he stated, "Now, wherever you hear or see this Word preached, believed, professed, and lived, do no doubt that the true ecclesia sancta catholica (Christian, holy people) must be there. . . . And even were no other sign than this alone, it would still suffice to prove that a Christian, holy people must exist there, for God's Word cannot be without God's people and, conversely, God's people cannot be without God's Word."¹⁹

If God's Word is to be central in the life and pulpit of a congregation, then we need to be clear about what biblical expository preaching is and is not. In my own theology of preaching, I agree with the work of Mark Dever and Greg Gilbert, who give us some of the "notes" of biblical expository preaching and contrast them with what is biblical expository preaching:

1. We're *not* saying expositional preaching has to go verse by verse through a book of the Bible. The important thing is not that the texts be sequential; it is

¹⁹. Albert Mohler, quoted by Caleb Kolstad, "The Primacy of Preaching," February 16, 2009, accessed November 9, 2016, <https://expositorythoughts.wordpress.com/2009/02/16/the-primacy-of-preaching/>.

that each text be allowed to speak, through the sermon, its own message in its own context.

2. We're *not* saying expositional preaching rules out topical preaching as a legitimate practice. Sometimes topical sermons are a great way to give the church a comprehensive look at what the Bible says about a topic.
3. We're *not* saying expositional preaching is just a series of lectures, the main goal of which is information transfer. To expose a text of Scripture to a congregation means that you expose it to their hearts. You explain to your congregation the thrust of the text—which seldom, by the way, requires any explanation at all the aorist aspect—and then you follow the thrust of that text all the way to the heart in application.²⁰

Dever and Gilbert are saying what many expositors hold true that expository preaching is not a style but a method that exposes the main, authoritative point of the text.

The office of pastor is almost synonymous with the biblical image of a shepherd. But what role does preaching play in this image? Shepherds feed, water, lead, guide, protect, and defend the flock they are given charge over, and many of these functions can be supported through preaching. The shepherd was a figure the church understands because it was an image Jesus used. In casting himself in the role of Good Shepherd, Jesus joined other leaders in Israel's past who were seen as shepherds of God's people, including Moses and King David:

Elsewhere in the ancient world "the shepherd" was widely used as a title for deities and kings. To rule was to pasture the people. Even in Psalm 23, the gentlest and most consoling of psalms, the shepherd is said to have a rod, the symbol of authority, with which he would discipline his sheep and examine them for disease as well as defend and protect them . . . The shepherd's work therefore demanded a subtle blend of authority and care.²¹

²⁰. Mark Dever and Greg Gilbert, *Preach: Theology Meets Practice* (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2012), 36-38.

²¹. Derek Tidball, *Skillful Shepherds: An Introduction to Pastoral Theology* (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity, 1986), 45-46.

John Piper opposes a recent trend toward the professionalization of pastoral ministry by noting, “We pastors are being killed by the professionalizing of the pastoral ministry. The mentality of the professional is not the mentality of the prophet. It is not the mentality of the slave of Christ. Professionalism has nothing to do with the essence and heart of Christian ministry.”²²

There is little question that pastoral ministry is varied, challenging, and unique among the professions, yet does that presuppose that pastors must be called to ministry and for that matter called to preach? And should preaching be the primary function of a pastor? Thomas Oden reasons, “Suppose a person is considering ministry, and thinks a call to ministry might have been received, but is unsure. Is such a call intrinsically untestable? Or is it possible to examine the evidence of God’s address to the heart in a call to ministry? Classical pastoral wisdom has thought it to be testable, and dangerous if unexamined.”²³ Pastoral calling has been synonymously linked to a call to preach:

The preacher is not merely interested in preaching, but is called to preach. Preaching is in response to God’s call; it is to accomplish something that God intends. Not merely a little talk on Sunday morning, preaching is efficacious speech, speech to accomplish a divine purpose. Jesus made preaching the primary focus of His ministry when He inaugurated His ministry, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.” (Luke 4:18).

Preaching remained a constant in Jesus’ public ministry. While he healed, fed, and had compassion on the crowds his proclamation of the good news of the gospel remained

²². John Piper, *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals: A Plea to Pastors for Radical Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2002), 1.

²³. Thomas C. Oden, *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry* (San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1982), 18.

front and center in his ministry. It should be the ballast and center of today's pastoral ministry as well.

Theology of Bi-Vocational Pastoring

Pastoral theology is the intersection where practice meets theology. Bi-vocational pastoral theology adds a third component to praxis and theology, with the folding of a theology of work into the mix.

First, let us consider pastoral theology. Pastoral theology has been defined as “that branch of Christian theology that deals with the office and function of the pastor.”²⁴ It seems simple enough to say that pastoral ministry should be informed by Christian theology and leave it at that, but the ministry of a pastor is a unique endeavor, not lending itself to easy analysis. Seldom systematic, often a messy, pastoral ministry is a mix of art and science yet anchored in the biblical text. Derek Tidball reflected on the complexity of pastoral theology when he said, “Pastoral theology has something of the character of an octopus. Anyone wishing to grapple with it should be warned that initially he may well find himself in the predicament of a deep sea diver who, all unwillingly, gets entangled with it.”²⁵ Bi-vocational pastoral theology includes the subset of pastors with two (or more) employers, which distinguishes them from regular pastoral positions that receive primary and exclusive compensation.

Pastoral theology has typically fallen under the area of practical theology. Thomas Oden comments that pastoral theology “is theology because it treats the consequences of God's self-disclosure in history. It is pastoral because it deals with those consequences as

²⁴. Oden, *Pastoral Theology*, x.

²⁵. Tidball, *Skillful Shepherds*, 13.

they pertain to the roles, tasks, duties and work of the pastor.”²⁶ Practical theology focuses on the everyday implications of Christian practice. Pastoral theology aims at the everyday practices of the pastor. Bi-vocational pastoral theology is distinctively different in that it incorporates a different lifestyle and approach to pastoral duties.

Second, let us consider the practice of pastoral ministry. It must be said from the outset that pastoral ministry is more than preaching. And the job description of the pastor and the vocational identity of pastors today are less clear and involve more confusion and disillusionment than in times past. Pastoral ministry is complex and involves many pastoral functions before and after the pulpit ministry of the church, including counseling, worship preparation, and leading administration, evangelism, family and youth ministry, stewardship, discipleship, and hospitality; each becomes part of the overall ministry of the pastor. Pastoral theology requires incarnational, real-world relationships lived out within the ministry of the community of faith. Pastoral preaching that has ethos, preaching that resonates, must come from the overall ministry and life of the preacher. If there is a disconnect between pulpit and people, the sermon lacks authenticity.

Third, as we enter the life of the bi-vocational pastor it is commonplace that a multitude of pastoral duties arise and a tension develops when the demands of pastoral care and a second job compete with study needed for sermon craft. This is a frequent rub for bi-vocational pastors who have a more restricted and regulated time frame in which to carry out both pastoral duties.

Traditionally, a bi-vocational pastor is defined as a pastor whose livelihood depends upon two or more streams of income: one from a ministry and one from the

²⁶. Oden, *Pastoral Theology*, x.

marketplace. Bi-vocational pastors are no less pastoral than fully funded pastors, yet traditional western ecclesiology, albeit relatively new, may assign values that indicate that a pastor who is in fully funded employment is a “real” pastor while the bi-vocational pastor is a “lesser” pastor. Yet, a ministry defined by paid hours at the church rather than the church’s affirmation of the call of God, biblical qualifications, and ministerial duties are not convincing reasons to insert a merit scale.

In Paul’s day, the bi-vocational minister was often the missionary-church planter; today it may be the small church pastor and/or the church planter. Current trends are being tracked by theologians like David Gustafson, who says:

Bi-vocational ministry is trending today. Driven by missional theology, incarnational ministry, theology of work and realities of post-Christendom, conferences and co-horts are being organized to equip pastors for bi-vocational pastoral ministry. “Bivo” pastors and missionaries are not new, however. Dual-role ministry, or tent making, as a means for Christian leaders to finance their missions, has been the practice of the church since its inception. In fact, throughout church history, the full-time, fully funded pastor is the exception and bi-vocational ministry is the norm.²⁷

Bi-vocational ministry began with Jesus and the apostles, who were fishermen who were quick to return to fishing after Jesus’ death. The apostle Paul was bi-vocational (1 Cor 4:12). In contrast to Peter and the other apostles, who were supported by the church collections, Paul made tents (Acts 4:34-37; 18:1-3). His example led to the term “tent making” to describe dual-role pastors, missionaries, and church planters who engage in ministry while having other employment. Paul’s practice continued as the general pattern during the early church and was typical until the fourth century. Tertullian (160–220) said, “Let the young persons of the church endeavor to minister diligently with

²⁷. David Gustafson, “A Church History of BIVO,” *EFCA Update*, April 13, 2016, 1.

all appropriate seriousness, so that you will always have sufficient funds to support both yourselves and those who are needy, and not burden the church of God. For we ourselves, besides our attention to the word of the Gospel, do not neglect our inferior employments. For some of us are fishermen, tentmakers, and farmers, so that we may never be idle.”²⁸

Throughout the New Testament we see that one of the main tasks of pastors faced in their calling was preaching. The tentmaker, self-supporting, bi-vocational apostle Paul admonished pastor Timothy to make the Word of God central in his ministry:

Command and teach these things. Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you. (1 Tim 4:11-14)

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. (2 Tim 4:1-2)

This charge comes with the eschatological outlook that Timothy must conduct himself with all urgency and carry out his call to preach regardless of the season, the receptivity of the hearers, and the cost to himself. Pastor Timothy was called to preach!

New Testament preaching began with a singular message, the message of the gospel, that would remain central to the church. Today, pastors must continue to keep this message central in their ministry because it is the message of the kingdom of God. The gospel is God's message, as the Baptist and Jesus demonstrated. John the Baptist came preaching a message of repentance (Matt 3:2), and Jesus' message also started with the call to repent: “From that time on Jesus began to preach, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of

²⁸. Gustafson, “Church History of BIVO,” 3.

heaven has come near.”” This comment by the Gospel writer comes after Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil and when he had fasted forty days and forty nights. His ministry began with preaching, but what did he preach? Clearly, Matthew says he preached repentance from sin as he ushered in the kingdom of God. The Gospels go on to show how Jesus called the twelve disciples, and this calling was to carry on the ministry of evangelistic preaching as they would become fishers of men (Matt 4:18-22). The preaching of the twelve apostles was a ministry that devoted itself to the ministry of the Word and prayer (Acts 6:4). This stewardship of the Word continued as the apostles did the work of evangelists as they preached the gospel of Christ that they had been entrusted with from the Savior, Jesus Christ. And at least one of them, Paul, apostle to the Gentiles, missionary, pastor, was bi-vocational.

The dominant reality of bi-vocational preaching is time, and for the bi-vocational preaching pastor the preparation needed for biblical expository sermons presents a crucial and ongoing challenge. The challenge is one that must be reckoned with if God’s Word is to be unleashed from the pulpit. The temptations and availability of sermons on the internet via websites, blogs, and other churches presents an opportunity to question the time, effort, and work involved in biblical expository sermon preparation. Why put so much original effort into sermon crafting when you already have so many issues competing for your time? Yet, the work involved in biblical expository preaching is the starting point for our theology of work. Preaching is hard, holy work! It can be nothing less if the workman is to rightly divide the word of God (2 Tim 2:15). Work is to be a labor of love and a stewardship of our gifts. The expositor must not be lazy, prone to

shortcuts, or give into the temptation to preach for acclaim but be ready to preach in season and out of season (2 Tim 4:1-2).

Preaching is noble work, but all work, any work, requires our theological consideration. The book of Genesis opens with chaos, and into chaos God speaks and creates order; from order, he institutes work and then declares it is good. God's world is a world of purpose and created order, and humans made in God's image have been given the ability to be in relationship with him and to find goodness in our work. Keller states, "In the beginning, then, God worked. Work was not a necessary evil that came into the picture later, or something human beings were created to do but that was beneath the great God Himself. No, God worked for the sheer joy of it. Work could not have a more exalted inauguration."²⁹ God's creative actions lead to His great delight and a wonderful declaration, and His mastery should orient us to the nature of work, all work. Yet, truth be known, many people today see work as a curse, not a delight. Work is something they do because they must do but do not necessarily want to do. But human beings have been designed not only to rest and play but also to work. From the beginning work has been God's design. But work changed after the curse, and where work had originally been a privilege afforded to Adam by God, it soon became a burden. After creation Adam was given the job to tend and keep in the garden, but after the fall God cursed the ground and caused thorns and thistles to grow from the earth (Gen 3:17-18). The work required to produce an expository sermon is significant by most standards.

The apostle Paul took the created design as part of our God-given mandate. Reflecting on work, he said, "For even when we were with you, we would give you this

²⁹. Timothy Keller, *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work* (New York, New York: Riverhead Books, 2012), 21.

command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.”³⁰ The primary purpose of work for human beings may not be delight, but it is part of the creation and paradise. Work was not the result of curse and human failure; it was part of God’s original design for us. Yet, this often lost on Christians who correlate paradise, heaven, and our eternal reward as in great part the absence of work. For them the elimination of work is a blissful existence and the true meaning of paradise.

Work is part of being made in God’s image. Tom Nelson notes, “When we grasp what God intended for His image bearers, it is not surprising that throughout the book of Proverbs the wise are praised for their diligence and the foolish are rebuked for their laziness. When we hear the word fool, we often think of someone who is mentally deficient. However, a foolish person in Scripture is not necessarily someone who lacks intelligence but rather one who lives as if God does not exist.”³¹ “The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” (Ps14:1.

Genesis 2 is the creation account that unveils God’s creative design for work and the role of human dominion over creation. Nelson writes,

As Genesis chapter 2 continues, we get a further picture of a human being as worker. We observe work as it was originally designed to be, before sin and death entered the world. In Genesis 2:15 we read these words, “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.” The Lord God takes the initiative and places humankind in the garden of Eden with a task in mind. The emphasis here is not about personal human choice but rather divine initiative and divine calling. Early in Genesis we see that vocation is not something we ultimately choose for ourselves; it is something to which God calls us. Contrary to much of our present cultural emphasis that defies personal choice, a biblical worldview begins not with human choice, but with a good and sovereign God who is not only the Creator but also the Caller.³²

³⁰. 2 Thessalonians 3:10, English Standard Version.

³¹. Tom Nelson, *Work Matters: Connecting Sunday Worship to Monday Work* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 23.

³². Nelson, *Work Matters*, 25.

The call to a vocation, livelihood, or profession is a significant decision and one that must be understood from a theological perspective:

First and foremost, work is not about economic exchange, financial remuneration, or a pathway to the American Dream, but about God-honoring human creativity and contribution. Our work, whatever it is, whether we are paid for it, is our specific human contribution to God's ongoing creation and to the common good. Work is an integral aspect of being human, an essential aspect of loving God and His created world, and a vital part of loving our neighbor as ourselves. Gilbert Meilaender presses into the rich implications of the truths presented to us in the Genesis account. He writes, "To regard work as a calling is to suggest that we live to work, that our work is of central significance for our person. Still more, the calling gives to work a religious significance which it is not likely to acquire in any other way."³³ For us to view work outside a theological framework is to inevitably devalue both work and the worker.³⁴

One of the inherent temptations in a life of double work for bi-vocational pastors is to devalue their second job. We do this merely by referring to it as the *other job* (emphasis mine).

Work that is of lesser value, a functional means to an end, work for pay only, or work that is not enjoyed can and will contribute to the devaluing process. But what about the inherent demands of a dual-employment career? Can it be detrimental, and unhealthy to attempt? Studies on this area of stress are lacking despite what we know about the increase in bi-vocational numbers. Yet, interest is growing, as Diane McDougall was noted as saying earlier, so that analysis of the role of bi-vocational pastoral ministry versus traditional pastoral ministry is on the rise. She comments:

Although the number of bi-vocational pastors across the country is approaching one third of all pastors, according to the February 19, 2015, issue of *Christian Media Magazine*, the bi-vocational pastorate isn't for everyone. As one pastor

³³. Mark R. Schwehn and Dorothy Bass, eds., *Leading Lives That Matter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 237, quoted by Nelson, *Work Matters*, 24.

³⁴. Nelson, *Work Matters*, 24.

admitted, after trying to minister bi-vocationally: “I know there are some guys who can juggle multiple responsibilities better than other guys. I’ve come to accept that I am not one of those guys.”³⁵

Little research is available on the stress levels of bi-vocational pastoral ministry, yet a great deal of study has been done on full-time, traditional pastoral ministry and the levels of job satisfaction, stress, and rewards. All recent studies continue to chronicle the hazards of pastoral ministry and the risk factors that haunt the profession. Yet, bi-vocational ministry may compound the degree of difficulty and the need for a particular skill set and giftedness:

Indeed, an ability to juggle is essential. Other qualities of an effective bi-vocational pastor include: financial contentment, business acumen, commitment to the priesthood of all believers, job flexibility and a sense of calling to a new way of doing church. Christians in other cultures have long recognized this “new way of doing church.” In Latin America, for example, bi-vo is a reality because the Catholic culture doesn’t view the Protestant pastor’s role as “a real job,” according to Manuel Abarca Saez, church planter for the Spanish-speaking ministries of Northwest Community Church in San Antonio, Texas. So there is little financial support for a full-time shepherd.³⁶

It is worth noting that during the days of the early church, the gospel spread rapidly at a time when 99.5 percent of Christians worked and were self-supporting, with few in fully funded pastoral ministry. Thus, bi-vocational pastoral ministry should not be considered a hindrance to the Great Commission. We have no clear scriptural mandate that pastoral ministry must be fully funded by the local congregation. Others may wonder where we get the idea that pastors should be paid at all. They assume because Paul was a tent maker, so pastors should not be paid. But 1 Tim 5:17 speaks to this issue, noting that

³⁵ Diane J. McDougall, “Living Both/And: The Many-Layered Lives of Bivocational Pastors,” *EFCA Today* (Spring 2016), 2, accessed November 10, 2016, <http://efcatoday.org/sites/default/files/downloads/printable/EFCA-Today-Spring2016.pdf>.

³⁶ McDougall, “Both/And,” 2.

the elders who rule well should be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the Word and doctrine. This principle allows those who labor in the ministry of the Scriptures to be supported financially. In 1 Cor 9, Paul quotes from Deut 25:4 when he says that you shall not muzzle the ox that treads out the grain. The principle Paul is lifting up is Jesus' teaching that the laborer is worth his hire (Luke 10).

Yet, there may be definite advantages to bi-vocational ministry that may prove to be strategic in the days before us. Advantages to bi-vocational ministry include the freedom of the pastor to earn supplemental income while reducing the financial strain on small, new, or fledging congregations the ability of pastors with executive functioning skills to maximize their stewardship of time while modeling a missional attitude to the people served marketplace identification with the congregants that models a work ethic that is both instructive and inspiring increased church budget income for missions, evangelism, and outreach rather than pastoral overhead as pastors model the working and living out of the gospel.

In the end, the theological foundations of bi-vocational ministry are important not because the goal of pastoral ministry is a bi-vocational life but because bi-vocational preaching pastors are preaching the same gospel as the fully funded pastor yet doing so in a dual work context. It is a case of different, not better or worse; contextual, not conflictual; honorable, not dishonorable; and a modern reality that may come closer to the way the early church preached the gospel. In fact, bi-vocational pastoral ministry is authentically incarnational, in that the second job is most often in a marketplace setting. While little data is available on the percentages of second jobs that are secular versus sacred, most bi-vocational second jobs are thought to be secular and can provide

marketplace ministry to the non-Christian in a way that a pastoral role and a second ministry job may not. Nelson writes,

For pastors to preach, and for us to conclude, that using our gifts within the context of a Christian organization is the only way we can truly invest our talents in the kingdom widely misses the mark of what the Bible truly teaches in its robust theology of vocation. Thinking that somehow certain kinds of work are “more full-time Christian” than other kinds; or that only some kinds of work have eternal value, while others do not; or that somewhere in life as we get older, we change our work so we can move from success to significance, are unbiblical distortions we must confront in our own lives and in our faith communities.³⁷

Ecclesiological conventions about pastoral ministry are changing yet may simply be a return to the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation view when the church rediscovered the biblical concept of vocation and the priesthood of all believers. Nelson reflects, “This doctrine, which held that every believer had equal access to God through Jesus Christ, profoundly altered the landscape of spiritual formation for followers of Christ who had languished under the distorted view that the calling to the priesthood, to a monastic community or to the service of the church was a higher, a more spiritual calling than to be a farmer or a merchant. The Protestant Reformers wisely connected Sunday faith to Monday work.”³⁸ Bi-vocational preaching pastors can live and preach a joyful contentment in their dual work and consequently encourage their congregants to see their work as a form of worship. Preaching biblical expository sermons that keep the Word of God central in the ministry of the church will encourage the delight as well as the demands of work. Work must be given its proper understanding if bi-vocational pastoral ministry is to be appreciated and affirmed. Work must be worship, and dual-work assignments are no exception. As Nelson writes,

³⁷. Nelson, *Work Matters*, 85.

³⁸. Nelson, *Work Matters*, 86.

When we contemplate who Jesus really is, His joyful contentment to work with His hands day after day constructing things, making useful farm implements, and household furniture in an obscure Nazareth carpenter shop, we find Him truly stunning. Jesus' work life tells us that He did not think a carpenter was somehow below Him or a poor use of His many gifts. Here is the very one who created the world but also the very wood He was crafting in a carpentry shop.³⁹

When we see work as part of our calling, we as bi-vocational preaching pastors have the opportunity to embrace both work roles as vocation, not just a means to an end. Then the dichotomy of sacred and secular work can live in mutual harmony rather than antagonistic tension. "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters."

³⁹. Nelson, *Work Matters*, 89-90.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will provide a relevant literature review on preaching strategies for bi-vocational pastors. There are three sections. The first section deals with the general understanding of and the need for expository preaching. The second section addresses the particular form of pastoral ministry that is bi-vocational, and the third section explores current preaching strategies for bi-vocational pastors who preach expository sermons.

In the first section, on the understanding of and need for expository preaching, I will examine some of the modern exemplars who have shaped the field of biblical expository preaching, including Haddon Robinson, Edmund Clowney, and John Stott. These three have made distinct contributions to the field of homiletics while advancing the importance of expository preaching for the church. They began in ministry representing three different traditions within Christendom being Baptist, Presbyterian, and Anglican yet concluded their careers ministering to a much broader audience. Stott and Robinson have had global influence. Many other homiliticians could be discussed, but the three I have chosen have reputations as exceptional teachers of exposition. Robinson is admired as an exceptional preacher, Stott as a superb exegete and prolific writer, while Clowney in the Reformed wing of evangelicalism is the least known of the three, although his emphasis on biblical theology made him worthy of inclusion. Selecting these three has been in part personal because of their influence on my development as a preacher. I have selected them from a diverse field of preachers because they represent three different but important components of expository preaching

well. They are like three different voices singing in unison. Each has individual qualities or characteristics of vocal range, vocal weight, tessitura, vocal timbre, but they come together to produce harmonized contribution with clarity of idea (Robinson), practical application for the real world (Stott), and the overarching meta-narrative of the revelation of redemption (Clowney).

Next, I will turn my focus to contemporary scholar-practitioners who have enriched the field with their more recent contributions. These include Jeffrey Arthurs, Bryan Chapell, Timothy Keller, and Randal Pelton. As in the case of the modern exemplars, many others could have been added to the contemporary list, but the ones I have selected have extended the importance of expository preaching by raising an awareness of, and the need for, preaching that is biblical, expository, and indispensable for today's church. While Keller and Pelton teach homiletics, they are primarily pastors (Keller recently left his post as senior pastor). Keller's books have sold more than one million copies, and his New York City church, Redeemer Presbyterian, is large and urban being responsible for planting more than one hundred churches globally. Randal Pelton has written one book, *Preaching with Accuracy*, but it begins with an essential question for this thesis-project: Does expositional preaching still work? This is a critical question that Pelton's book, written for pastors by a pastor, answers. He extends the work of Robinson by sharpening our aim on the big idea bulls-eye.

The second section of this literature review will examine the bi-vocational pastoral ministry, specifically those writers who have researched and advocated for bi-vocational pastors and championed their calling.

In the third section, I will contend that most preaching discussions neglect the bi-vocational pastor. However, it is my contention that, bi-vocational pastors need special consideration because they are susceptible to unique challenges that can put a strain on their sermon preparation, development, and delivery. Over the course of bi-vocational pastoral ministry, thoughtful, strategic planning can, and should, enhance the ability to craft sermons. Sermon study is not the same for all pastors. Bi-vocational ministry has a distinctive feel, pace, and lifestyle that seems to demand a different approach to the art and craft of preaching. This assumption will be reviewed and will lend a rationale for the project design and research in chapters 4 and 5.

Expository Preaching

An expository sermon is clearly distinguished from a topical or textual sermon in that topical sermons are based on a series of verses connected to a single topic, and textual sermons begin with a single text that launches a sermon into various issues. In contrast, the expository sermon seeks to expose the single, complete thought in one unit of thought. As Robinson notes, “expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, that affirms the obvious.”¹

This first section has two parts. As noted previously, I will review a select but significant group of exemplary preachers, one British (John Stott) and two American (Haddon Robinson and Edmund Clowney), whose works have been foundational in understanding the need for biblical expository preaching. Special attention will be given

¹. Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1980), 33.

to their inspiring works that have made significant contributions to the teaching and training of pastors for decades and should be included in any preacher's library.

Haddon Robinson was the Harold John Ockenga Distinguished Professor of Preaching and Senior Director of the Doctor of Ministry program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He joined Gordon-Conwell in 1991 and served as interim president from July 2007 to August 2008. Before that he was president of Denver Seminary and taught extensively at Dallas Seminary. One of his last major projects that has been used is *Theology of Work*, which has direct application for bi-vocational pastors and the church at large. It has many resources on the topic of faith and its relationship to work. Robinson has taught generations of pastors and teachers who are helping to shape the evangelical pulpits of today. His impact on the field of homiletics was profound, he is regarded as an expert in preaching. Robinson's signature book, *Biblical Preaching* (1980), now in its third edition, is used in seminaries and graduate schools worldwide. Considered by many to be the "teacher of preachers," his book has sold more than 300,000 copies and is a contemporary classic in the field and is now in its third edition. In that work, he defines expository preaching as "the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through him to his hearers."² This definition emphasizes that expository preaching is more than a technique, method, or formula for manufacturing sermons but is a philosophy and an approach for understanding that the passage governs the sermon. This is an approach to preaching that shoves aside the style preferences of

² Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 20.

our age and advocates for preaching that takes exposition of the Bible seriously. Moreover, it is preaching that rejects the emphasis on motivational and self-help sermons. What expository preaching does is place emphasis on the ancient text as it seeks to deliver and expound the meaning of a particular text to the modern congregation. Robinson emphasizes that in expository preaching the biblical text informs the substance and structure of a sermon, not the other way around. The sermon does not and should not inform the substance and structure of the biblical text. The sermon is not the final authority, the Bible is final because God is final.

We live in a culture where fewer people are growing up in the church and respect for the role of the pastor seems to be waning. The average person in our society does not give high grades to preachers as being intellectual or even moral leaders. So, preachers have less authority than ever, and the expository sermon can intentionally help the listener tap into the authority of the text, not the preacher, and ultimately the authority of God.

Robinson's emphasis on each sermon having a "big idea" may be the memorable take-away from *Biblical Preaching*. In his chapter, "What Is the Big Idea?" he notes that fragmentation poses a particular danger for the expository preacher. And "a major affirmation of our definition of expository preaching, therefore, "maintains that expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept."³ Robinson illustrates his point by saying, "A sermon should be a bullet and not buckshot. Ideally each sermon is the explanation, interpretation or application of a single dominant idea supported by other ideas, all drawn from one passage or several passages of scripture."⁴ This is the

³. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 33.

⁴. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 33.

greatest contribution of Robinson to expository preaching: emphasizing the importance of the homiletical big idea, the singular idea that drives all others in the expository sermon.

Robinson believes that every sermon should have a singular, overarching idea, a concise summary of what the preacher is trying to say and ultimately accomplish. In fact, a preacher should be able to state the big idea in a clear, short sentence. But again, this is not a formula by Robinson but an approach to the text in which everything in the sermon supports and leads to that one clear idea. He reasons, “Effective sermons major in biblical ideas brought together into overarching unity.”⁵ Robinson emphasizes that God uses ideas to communicate, and preaching should identify and communicate those ideas to the listener.

John Stott, my second exemplar of expository preaching, was a British pastor-scholar and a well-respected advocate of expository preaching. Stott was the Anglican rector emeritus of All Souls Church, Langham Place, London, and founder of the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity. His gifts as expositor, pastor, biblical scholar, and evangelist were eclipsed only by his profound vision for the evangelization of the world through his commitment to the Great Commission. He may have been best known for his New Testament commentaries and articles, yet his passion for expositional preaching soared high because of his scholarly acumen and pastor’s heart. A pastor-teacher with an undying affirmation of expository preaching, he brought together a combination of skill, heart, and head.

Stott’s classic work, *Between Two Worlds* (1982), was a pastoral approach to preaching with a total conviction about the expositional method. Stott contextualized the

⁵. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 37.

purpose of preaching in his chapter called the “Theological Foundations for Preaching,” in which he stated his convictions about preaching only after he stated his convictions about God, the church, Scripture, and the pastorate. Thus, his urgings about expository preaching are underpinned by his theological convictions. As Stott noted, “Theology is more important than methodology.”⁶ Stott’s belief in the expository method is reflected in his description of preaching: “It is my contention that all true Christian preaching is expository preaching.”⁷ Stott, like Robinson, emphasizes accurate exegesis of the text, a central or homiletical big idea from the text and the importance that the points of application must come from the main idea of the text. Yet, Stott’s preparation goes to exegesis first, and application second, and that comes across in his preaching. Robinson’s sermon delivery is more fluid, and less demarcated, observed in his conversational delivery. In *Between Two Worlds*, Stott builds a bridge between the modern world’s questions and the ancient text’s answers. The core of his methodology on exposition comes from his conviction that preaching is bridge building. It is here that he takes the methodology of expository preaching that leads the audience on the road to application that is relevant to the contemporary world.

Stott’s conviction that exegesis must lead to application is heard in his comment: “Yet to assert that ‘preaching is exposition’ would not be a wholly satisfactory equation, for then preaching would do no more than the interpretation of the biblical documents and would have no necessary concern for any contemporary application.”⁸ Preachers, in Stott’s view, can produce fine exposition yet fail to apply it to the real world. Or

⁶ John Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 92.

⁷ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 125.

⁸ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 135.

preachers can produce good application yet miss the authority of the text because they do not do the work of exposition properly or well. In Stott's view the two worlds must be bridged. His emphasis on bridging the ancient and contemporary worlds with expository sermons is a preventative word to the expositor who may address only the ancient text without applying its truth or who may exegete the culture but fail to anchor it in the truths of the text.

Edmund Clowney, my third exemplar, was ordained to the Presbyterian preaching ministry in 1942; from 1952 to 1984, he served as professor of practical theology at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. Clowney served as president of Westminster Theological Seminary from 1966 to 1982. He was a theologian, educator, and pastor who continued to be active in writing, teaching, and preaching after his retirement from Westminster. Much of Clowney's influence as a scholar was felt in his influence with Reformed preachers encouraging them to embrace biblical theology in their preaching by treating the Scriptures as a narrative unfolding the redemptive work of Christ. In *Preaching and Biblical Theology* (1975), Clowney formalized his contribution to expository preaching by emphasizing the importance of biblical theology. He noted: "Current discussions of the scriptural *Kerygma*, in spite of their learning and value, have commonly failed to appreciate the implications of the biblical doctrine of the word of God. The authority of the written Word, which is unfolded in biblical theology as the basis of all authority in preaching, is denied or minimized. For a genuine renewal of authority in preaching, the biblical theology of verbal revelation must be studied."⁹ Clowney did not offer a specific definition of expository preaching but desired to bridge

⁹ Edmund Clowney, *Preaching and Biblical Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1975), 30.

the gap that often exists between study and pulpit by making biblical theology relevant and powerful and always centering on Christ.

Through his writing, teaching, and preaching Clowney influenced evangelicals to preach the entire Bible, and with an urgency that was driven by an understanding of biblical theology and that we are living in the last days, so we must additionally recognize the importance of eschatology. “Our preaching cannot have the boldness or urgency of Peter’s until we have understood the perspective from which his addresses are formed, the perspective of the whole New Testament. Biblical Theology has here rendered a great service to the church. On all sides, it is recognized that any who would take the New Testament seriously must be confronted by eschatology.”¹⁰

Clowney’s major contribution was that he was instrumental in introducing to the next generation of expository preachers an emphasis on biblical theology that is redemptive and Christocentric. Clowney notes: “Most important of all, biblical theology serves to center preaching on its essential message: Jesus Christ. Preaching must be theological. Salvation is of the Lord, and the message of the Gospel is the theocentric message of the unfolding of the plan of God for our salvation in Jesus Christ.”¹¹ He reminds his readers that “the unifying structure of scripture is the structure of redemptive history.”¹² Therefore, according to Clowney, biblically faithful expository preaching has one essential message—Jesus Christ. His contribution influenced the next generation of Reformed expositors, including one of his students who is making a significant impact, Timothy Keller.

¹⁰. Clowney, *Preaching and Biblical Theology*, 66-67.

¹¹. Clowney, *Preaching and Biblical Theology*, 74.

¹². Clowney, *Preaching and Biblical Theology*, 74-75.

In sum, the strengths of each, while different, have made a positive impact on homiletics. Robinson made clarity of supreme importance through his commitment to the homiletical big idea, Stott emphasized making application of the ancient text relevant by building bridges into the contemporary world, and Clowney advocated for the overarching need for biblical theology to stress the urgency of redemptive history that points to Christ. Each scholar understood that expository preaching was the sum of its parts but are remembered most for these contributions to the craft.

The second part of this section is a review of notable contemporary scholars whose work has advanced and refined earlier efforts to produce biblical expository sermons. These teachers and pastor-teachers have added immensely to my growth as a preaching pastor, and to them I owe a debt of gratitude. They also bring a unique contribution to the field of homiletics that any expositor will find helpful in building biblically faithful churches. They offer the preacher help by fostering creativity, increasing accuracy, promoting an awareness of the interaction between the Word and the listener as well as the indispensability of Christ-centered sermons. Each, like the modern exemplars Stott, Robinson, and Clowney, bring their own gifts and convictions to homiletics and are currently in the field making a difference.

Jeffrey D. Arthurs is dedicated to preaching all six of the major genres of Scripture to improve variety in preaching. He argues that genre-sensitive preaching seeks to replicate the impact of the text and this affirms the great freedom in form that is available to preachers and broadens their understanding of preaching by urging effective understanding of the rhetorical function of biblical genres. His expertise in rhetoric builds

on the work of Thomas Long,¹³ who saw the importance of the form of a sermon as being absolutely vital to the meaning of the sermon because of the shape it naturally gives to the message, and Don W. Wardlaw, who asks: “So, then, the controlling question, what does it mean for sermon form to embody and express God’s Word in Scripture?”¹⁴ Arthurs’s focus on genres highlights the inherent wealth we possess in the forms that contain and shape Scriptures.

Jeffrey D. Arthurs is professor of preaching and communication, and chair of the Division of Practical Theology at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Arthurs is a past president of the Evangelical Homiletics Society and an active scholar, regularly presenting papers at conferences and writing articles for periodicals such as the *Journal of Communication and Religion*, *Preaching*, *Leadership*, and *Preaching Today* online. His *Preaching with Variety* and *Devote Yourself to the Public Reading of Scripture* are both published by Kregel. In addition to his scholarly and pulpit work he is known as a mentor and encourager of preachers. Arthurs’s signature encouragement to expository preachers may be his passion for preachers to preach all the genres of Scripture in a way that adds variety and imagination to their preaching. His methodology assumes that

expository preachers pay attention to form. We consider not only what God has communicated but also how he has communicated. And because there is no such thing as *the* sermon form, we have freedom to use various communication methods to unleash the rhetorical force of the text. Just as our Lord and the prophets used rational and affective modes of communication—discourse and narrative, word, image, monologue and dialogue, prose and poetry—so can we. Give it a try!¹⁵

¹³. Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 117.

¹⁴. Wardlaw, *Preaching Biblically*, 22.

¹⁵. Jeffery Arthurs, *Preaching with Variety: How to Re-Crete the Dynamics of Biblical Genres* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic and Professional, 2007), 201.

Arthurs's work has helped expository preachers understand the "rhetorical dynamics" of the various literary genres found in Scripture and think intentionally about how to preach effectively such texts in a way that honors the form in which God inspired them. Thomas Long focused on the form of the sermon, "Sermon form is a curious beast,"¹⁶ and Don Wardlaw advocated for new sermon shapes that reflect the diverse genres of literature, "The straitjacket of an argument also often hinders the preacher's expression in delivery."¹⁷ Arthurs's method of addressing each literary category includes the nature of the genre and how it communicates truth within that literary form.

Preaching with Variety offers many practical communication insights for the preacher as an adjunct to the technical realities of the Bible as literature. His clear delineation of the genres and their inherent power is what distinguishes his work from previous writings that emphasized genre-sensitive preaching. His is a vital contribution that challenges staleness and encourages preachers to expand their horizons and leave the comfort of the familiar, promising they will find beauty and variety in the many genres of Scripture. For the bi-vocational preacher who might be fighting staleness and burnout Arthurs's invitation to preach with variety can refresh their tired pulpit.

Bryan Chapell's work follows in the tradition of Geerhardus Vos and Edmund Clowney. By choosing authority and redemption as the key words to summarize Christ-centered preaching, Chapell uses two words that could just as easily describe the key words for Clowney's *Preaching and Biblical Theology*. Chapell writes in response to what he sees as two enemies of expository preaching. The first is the erosion of biblical authority in favor of subjectivism and relativism; the second is the substitution of duty-

¹⁶ Long, *Witness of Preaching*, 117.

¹⁷ Wardlaw, *Preaching Biblically*, 17.

oriented, moralistic preaching for Christocentric preaching. Both are remedied, according to Chappell, with expository preaching.

Bryan Chapell presently serves as president emeritus and adjunct professor of practical theology at Covenant Theological Seminary, where he served as president from 1994 to 2012. His teaching career began at Covenant Seminary in 1984 after ten years in pastoral ministry. After a long and distinguished career in academics, Chapell accepted a call to return to serve as senior pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Peoria, Illinois, in January 2013.

Chapell offers this definition of expository preaching: “The technical definition of an expository sermon requires that it expound Scripture by deriving from a specific text main points and sub points that disclose the thought of the author, cover the scope of the passage, and are applied to the lives of listeners.”¹⁸ In less technical terminology he describes expository preaching as “saying what the text says, showing what it means and then motivating God’s people to follow what it says.”¹⁹ To measure and appreciate Chapell’s influence on expository preaching we must examine his Christ-centered hermeneutics and their impact on preaching. Chapell notes that “statements of truth, even biblical truth, do not automatically make a message for the pulpit. Well-constructed sermons require unity, purpose and application.”²⁰ A key concept in the development of all expository sermons, according to Chapell, depends on the clear identification of a Fallen Condition Focus (FCF).²¹ “Fallen Condition Focus is the mutual human condition

¹⁸. Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming THE Expository Sermon*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 132.

¹⁹. Bryan Chapell, “What Is Expository Preaching?” July 28, 2014, accessed April 21, 2017, [https:// www.youtube.com/watch](https://www.youtube.com/watch).

²⁰. Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 44.

²¹. Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 269.

that contemporary believers share with those to or about whom the text was written that requires the grace of the passage for God's people to glorify and enjoy Him."²² "The Fallen Condition Focus reveals a text's and sermon's purpose."²³ In Chapell's methodology, the theological-redemptive emphasis on the FCF centers the sermon's aim on the one specific aspect of Christ's redemption that addresses the FCF. Chapell believes that without presenting the central truth of Christ's redemptive work for humanity, the sermon will lose its power and integrity as a Christian sermon. Bi-vocational preaching pastors, like many evangelical pastors, have to avoid falling into a moralistic trap of trying to promote God-like behavior by secular means. Christ-centered sermons provide the grace-centered remedy.

Timothy J. Keller, my third contemporary homilician, is the former pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City, apologist, theologian, and author of *The New York Times* bestselling books *The Reason for God* and *The Prodigal God*, but it is his prowess as a preacher that has elevated his renown. In his 2015 book, *Preaching*, Keller presents three aspects of preaching: 1) preaching the Word in a Christocentric way, 2) preaching to people, and 3) preaching in the Spirit. His foundational section is on preaching the Word.²⁴ He summarizes the main types of preaching as he quotes Hughes Oliphant Old's *The Reading and Preaching of Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*.²⁵ Old's synopsis of preaching in every century and every Christian tradition brings him to the conclusion that there are five basic types of sermons: expository,

²². Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 50.

²³. Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 48.

²⁴. Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communication in an Age of Skepticism* (New York, NY: Penguin Random House, 2015), 27.

²⁵. Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), quoted in Keller, *Preaching*, 29.

evangelistic, catechetical, festal, and prophetic. Keller qualifies Old's categories by seeing different occasions, but the five are not that different from each other in form: "There are, then, in the end, two basic forms of preaching: expository and topical."²⁶

Keller makes a case for expository preaching but recommends occasional topical sermons as a necessary form of preaching. In his chapter "The Case for (Usually) Doing Expository Preaching," Keller states: "So the primary reason we should normally do expository preaching is that it expresses and unleashes our belief in the whole Bible as God's authoritative, living and active Word."²⁷ Keller's book on preaching addresses the question of whether preaching should change or challenge the listeners (culture) and whether expository preaching is still relevant. He cites Andy Stanley, who argues that biblical expository preaching worked at a time when our society agreed on the importance and truth of Scripture, but now Stanley advocates for starting sermons with human need and then bringing in the Bible for a response and application. Keller quotes Stanley asking; "To what extreme are you willing to go to create a delivery system that will connect with the heart of your audience?"²⁸ Keller concludes that there is no need to pit the goals of expository preaching against the life of change, saying that the two positions of "adapt to the culture" and "confront the culture" are not as mutually exclusive as they appear."²⁹

Keller is an advocate and practitioner of expository preaching, and his setting in New York may be a modern-day equivalent of Paul's Mars Hill in that it has allowed him the opportunity to think and dialogue with modern-day skeptics. His experience in New

²⁶. Keller, *Preaching*, 30.

²⁷. Keller, *Preaching*, 32.

²⁸. Keller, *Preaching*, 35.

²⁹. Keller, *Preaching*, 97.

York is reflected in his understanding of preaching as being shaped and subsequently practiced by an understanding of our cultural context. Bi-vocational preachers live and work in the marketplace and should be able to gain from Keller's affinity for the agora as well as exposition.

Randal Emery Pelton, who is the senior pastor at Calvary Bible Church in Mount Joy, Pennsylvania, is also a homiletics professor at Lancaster Bible College and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. In *Preaching with Accuracy*, Pelton advances Robinson's classic *Biblical Preaching* and Chapell's *Christ-Centered Preaching* by developing the preacher's ability to identify the dominant idea of a preaching portion but also allow the language and concepts of the portion to shape the sermon. This is what many attempt to do in sermon work but find themselves settling for lesser ideas.

Pelton's influence comes from his virtuoso efforts to help preachers communicate the main (and most important) idea of the biblical text by learning greater accuracy in their exposition and preaching. His methodology aims to identify correctly the main point and essential theology of the passage. He believes the preacher must hit the intended target of the biblical author (the main idea) rather than preach secondary points and miss the bulls-eye. He notes, "Preaching with greater accuracy involves knowing how big ideas and little ideas interrelate to create meanings."³⁰ Pelton's focus on accuracy comes with a desire that preachers do not misrepresent or mislead the congregation but communicate God's truth clearly and with its intended, God-given authority. His book aids expositors who can become lost in the weeds of the passage, if care is not given to finding the dominant idea of the text. Pelton wants preachers to be able say to their

³⁰. Randal Emery Pelton, *Preaching with Accuracy: Finding Christ-Centered Big Ideas for Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2014), 39.

congregations with confidence: “Let me tell you what God is saying to us this morning.”³¹ The time pressures and schedule restrictions of bi-vocational pastors can rush the decision-making process involved in sermon preparation, Pelton slows this process down and details the approach for determining the homiletical big idea with greater accuracy.

Many other practitioners could be added to this select list, but the ones included have taught an untold number of biblical expository preachers how to stay on target. They have clarified common features in biblical expository preaching while elucidating its breadth and adding depth to the art and craft of expository preaching.

Bi-Vocational Pastoral Ministry

The second section of this literature review will examine the bi-vocational pastoral ministry. The scope of this review includes books and articles written about preaching pastors who earn their living through two vocations. Typically, their time is split between their role as a pastor of a local church from twenty to forty hours per week and their second job, most often in a non-church position, from twenty to forty hours per week. The amount of time dedicated to either the church or the second job is determined by many factors, including the size and economy of the church and the financial benefits of the second job.

While the biblical model most recognizable for bi-vocational pastors is that of tentmaker (Acts 18:2-4), the role is generally at odds with the western historical view of

³¹. Pelton, *Preaching with Accuracy*, 163.

pastoral ministry. Stott, an exemplar expositor lauded above, gives little hope to a church with anything but a full-time pastor. He remarked:

A congregation of any size needs to have on its team at least one full-time stipendiary pastor. The New Testament seems clearly to envisage this situation. Paul not only urges that he “who is taught the word shares all good things with those who teaches” (Galatians 6:6, I Timothy 5:17-18). The reason for a full-time paid pastorate is that freed from the need to earn his own living, he is able to devote himself exclusively to the pastoral care of the people and particularly to the ministry of the word and prayer. Such a ministry, involving individual counseling, and group work, intercession and study, preparing and preaching, is extremely exacting. It cannot be satisfactorily accomplished by part-time pastors alone, although such are essential to a team.³²

Stott’s perspective, while penned more than thirty years ago, still anchors much of the expectation for today’s pastor in the western world, but times and needs are changing, and the attention given to bi-vocational ministry is beginning to turn. Research on bi-vocational pastorates lags far behind research on full-time pastoral ministry; most of this research seems to be done by denominational executives and for bi-vocational pastors in the church planting or renewal ministries. Often the research is to support these pastors and is a recognition that bi-vocational ministry is a necessity in many financial sectors of the world. Yet, bi-vocational pastoring is by and large treated much like a 1 to 1 draw in a sporting event: It is a game in which there is no winner.

Two helpful primers on bi-vocational ministry, one dated and one new, provide an orientation to the ecosphere of bi-vocational pastoring. First is the landmark book, *The Tentmaking Pastor*, by Dennis Bickers, which provides one of the best early overviews of the tentmaking pastor.³³ Bicker’s approach to bi-vocational ministry comes from the joy

³². Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 207.

³³. Dennis W. Bickers, *The Tentmaking Pastor: The Joy of Bivocational Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000).

it offers to those who make it their endeavor. He speaks from experience as a bi-vocational pastor who is familiar with small church settings and their challenges, including the high turnover rate and a lack of resources. Bickers advocates for long pastorates that develop trust and leadership acumen, and he sees bi-vocational ministry as particularly needed for church planting, the replacement of the aging pastoral ranks, and as a possible solution to high burn-out and drop-out rates in pastoral ministry.

In short, Bickers says there is a need for bi-vocational pastors and the need must be recognized to deal with trends and changes in ministry, these being primarily the financial freedom, security, and community involvement that a second job provides. His work is comprehensive and addresses all the important areas of bi-vocational ministry, including preparation for, the rewards of, and the necessity of balance and self-care in ministry. He emphasizes the importance of preaching for the pastor but is not a committed expositor, instead approaching preaching from a more eclectic stance. His contribution can be helpful for the pastoral candidate considering bi-vocational pastoral ministry.

Fifteen years after Bickers's publication came a book that reshapes our understanding of bi-vocational pastoral ministry, *BIVO*, by Hugh Halter. While Bickers writes from a mainline church context and advocates for bi-vocational pastoring from within the parish setting, Halter is anything but traditional. Halter writes from the vantage point of the prophet who exegetes western culture. He makes numerous critiques of its effect on the church of Jesus Christ and sees the leverage of resources as the key issue for the church today. And because "the economics of the world are deeply affecting the

economics of the church,”³⁴ Halter strongly critiques the western church model as consumer-oriented and based on growth, optimism, and the promise of financial blessing. In his view, “Many churches are leveraged to the max, and the engines are decelerating at best or have totally shut down at worst.”³⁵

Halter advocates for a biblical approach for churches and sees the dominant footprint of the crumbling western church based on its

“unnatural environment we call consumer church. It costs too much and therefore puts incredible pressure on us to prop up the system to keep our livelihood going. It’s made heroes only of those who could speak eloquently or lead a large multitude into a shallow pool, but we’ve died in the process. As we got sucked into the vortex of putting on the Sunday performance for a group of people that may not want to actually follow Jesus.”³⁶

Halter’s view of self-supporting ministry is a discipleship model where one cannot be too churchy or lose the joy of being a family of friends and fellow missionaries. He encourages churches to reject the business approach to church with fully-funded pastors who are hired to run the machinery of the church and perform for the consumers (the congregation). Halter believes bi-vocational pastors can help free the church from performance as they identify with all the members who work for a living. He is an advocate writing with a love-hate relationship with the church and with a passion to see congregations and pastors leverage their time, money and efforts for the good of the kingdom.

Our examination of the bi-vocational pastoral ministry hinges on one’s understanding of the nature of work and vocational calling. And much of the current

³⁴. Hugh Halter, *BIVO: A Modern Day Guide for Bi-vocational Saints* (Littleton, CO: Mission Publishing, 2013), 10.

³⁵. Halter, *BIVO*, 13.

³⁶. Halter, *BIVO*, 132.

understanding of work and pastor's work has been biased by the traditional western concept of work. Halter challenges the way ministry is thought about and practiced when he argues that it would be a shock to many Christians to learn that the gospel was spread throughout the ancient world almost exclusively by unpaid and self-supporting believers. Halter asserts that the church has misunderstood financial remuneration for ministry, noting that "there have always been state paid priests, monastics and spiritual leaders who have lived lives completely focused on the Gospel, but until about 100-200 years ago, the support of spiritual leaders was pretty minimal at best. The picture of a pastor being fully funded, with bennies, a parsonage, and fifty hours a week to completely focus on ministry ventures is really quite strange."³⁷ Halter's view, while historically accurate at many points, fails to understand that pastoral ministry settings vary, and the process of change should not come at the expense of people. His approach is very entrepreneurial, prophetic, and may work well in a silo church plant but may be not suited for the revitalization of established congregations. His approach appears to be a change at all cost. Additionally, he does not mention preaching or its importance in bi-vocational pastoral ministry. Perhaps he will in another book? But for one so concerned with change he seems to neglect the greatest change agent, God's Word.

Admittedly, Halter's view of full-time pastoral ministry is not the western norm, and he sees himself as a change agent in the midst of reluctant people "Making a full-time living from the Gospel is biblical and if you can do it, I am very happy for you."³⁸ He believes the church's understanding of work and ministry are due for a paradigm change. The change will not be easy; in his estimation, but it may be necessary if the

³⁷. Halter, *BIVO*, 71.

³⁸. Halter, *BIVO*, 28.

church is to advance the gospel. He does not intend to belittle or challenge those in full-time capacity but says, “Bi-vocational is not the goal but it can and will be an emerging option to get to the goal.”³⁹ The goal is the spread of the gospel throughout the world. I would caution Halter in advocating a process of change that may not work universally.

Other works that address bi-vocational ministry but are not limited to pastoral ministry include J. Christy Wilson’s *Today’s Tentmakers*,⁴⁰ which is a handbook for tentmaking overseas and an alternative to traditional mission efforts. Wilson, a long-time tentmaker and scholar-missionary, highlights the unprecedented opportunity before the church to go into all the world and share the gospel via tentmaking (i.e., self-supporting ministry). On the basis of his study of the apostle Paul’s approach to tentmaking missions (Acts 18:3), Wilson also discusses William Carey’s self-supporting missionary work and the many Old Testament saints who entered all aspects of society while making an impact for the Lord through their secular work.

Articles on bi-vocational ministry consistently appear in various publications, blog posts, and denominational literature. I will comment on several here. Ed Stetzer, former director of Life Way Christian Resources and Professor of Missions and Evangelism at Wheaton College, has written a number of articles on bi-vocational pastors. Stetzer believes that bi-vocational ministry offers challenges as well as opportunities for both the pastor and the church. Stetzer is an advocate for bi-vocational pastors who have often been looked down on by other denominational ministers.⁴¹ Most

³⁹ Halter, *BIVO*, 29.

⁴⁰ J. Christy Wilson, *Today’s Tentmakers: Self Support: An Alternative Model for Worldwide Witness* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1979; reprint ed., Eugene, OR.: Wipf & Stock, 2002).

⁴¹ Ed Stetzer, “Bi-Vocational Ministry as an Evangelism Opportunity,” *Christianity Today*, accessed October 15, 2017), CT Exchange.

articles like those on the web site of Pastoral Care Inc. are short but encouraging and challenge the status of bi-vocational pastors with quotes like, “Paul never apologized for being bi-vocational so why should you?”⁴² They articulate the suggestions for those considering bi-vocational ministry: simple, helpful guidelines that are needed before embarking on a bi-vocational ministry, but as noted, very brief.

A survey of current articles that specifically address bi-vocational preaching include two short articles. *Sunday’s a Comin’: The Preaching Ministry for the Bi-Vocational Pastor*,⁴³ In this article Keith Davenport discusses ways to be intentional in the use of your time, especially sermon prep time. He encourages the busy bi-vocational pastor despite all the demands of ministry to make preaching a priority. He offers his approach to etching out his sermon preparation with four principles. First, take time to plan. Second, you preach to a community so be in touch with the community, Third, see the big picture of Christian formation and how sermons are part of it. And lastly, don’t sacrifice good biblical scholarship for good presentation. Writing for bi-vocational pastors struggling to figure it all out, Davenport regularly blogs on issues related to bi-vocational pastoral ministry. Davenport’s humility and genuine awareness of his audience and his ethos is refreshing. His article captures some of the essentials of his struggle and how a commitment to sermon prep must be a pastoral priority.

Marty Duren notes that being a bi-vocational pastor can be dreadfully taxing and shares how to make sermon prep not as burdensome. His article, *3 Sermon Prep Tips for*

⁴². Pastoral Care, Inc., accessed 2015, “Bi-Vocational Pastors,” <https://www.pastoralcareinc.com/>.

⁴³. Keith Davenport. “Preachers Magazine, Mentoring Preachers,” *Sunday’s Comin: The Preaching Ministry for the Bi-Vocational Pastor*, accessed March 21, 2019, <http://wwwpreacher magazine.org>.

Bi-vocational Pastors,⁴⁴ hopes to help others. Tip #1 is to construct each sermon series framework in advance. This is to avoid the trap of creating new sermons from scratch each week. Tip # 2 is reach through books of the Bible often. This gives you a head start on the framework because it is already there. Tip #3 is to use Evernote and Evernote Web Clipper to save content. He recommends these tools because they can save lots of time. He encourages smart work as well as hard work. Obviously, not an in-depth analysis but short cuts to help bring focus to an important task.

Overall, the articles on bi-vocational ministry take a positive view of bi-vocational ministry. One exception is Beau Underwood's article, *The Dangers of Bi-vocational Ministry*,⁴⁵ which brings a very dim perspective. The reader is immediately confronted with an illustration that shows the overworked pastor being swarmed by demands, then the author, who is a bi-vocational minister, articulates his 2 objections to bi-vocational ministry. First, he says that ministry is getting more complex not less. And goes on to enumerate how the cultural issues demand a greater sophistication from an articulate clergy. It is not clear how this works against a bi-vocational pastorate? I guess I am less sophisticated because I am bi-vocational? Secondly, he claims that the growth of bi-vocational ministry degrades ministry as a profession. This is a rather cutting assertion from one in bi-vocational ministry himself. But Underwood reasons that bi-vocational ministry should be a default mode and full-time, fully funded pastorates should be the healthy norm. I consider the article an outlier and question if he is experiencing burn out?

⁴⁴. Marty Duran, "3 Sermon Tips for Bi-Vocational Pastors, *Leadership*, July 31, 2015.

⁴⁵. Beau Underwood, "The Dangers of Bi-vocational Ministry," accessed July 30, 2014, <https://solo.net/print>.

Not everyone is suited for bi-vocational ministry, but it does not mean it is damaging the pastorate as a profession.

I have already presented a theology of work articulating Scripture's teaching about work (see chapter 2). But one's understanding of God's intentions for a pastor's work has great bearing on the pastor's view of bi-vocational ministry. The bi-vocational pastor's theology and perspective on work will determine answers to questions such as, is a second job only a means to an end that is endured until the goal of full-time Christian worker status can be financially met? What about when work becomes an idol and a person a workaholic? What is our understanding of the purpose of work? What do I do with a painful work environment and disillusionment with my job?

These questions and how one answers them tell a great deal about the worker and are worth prayerful theological reflection if you are bi-vocational. Tom Nelson in *Work Matters*⁴⁶ has made a significant contribution to the understanding not just of work and a theology of work but also, in his own words, a "robust theology of work." An understanding that connects our Sunday worship with our Monday work."⁴⁷ Too often Christians consider work the result of the fall, or a joke, as in the case of the television sitcom *The Office*, where employees are neurotically engaged in play, revenge, or a place to live out and manage their broken lives in dramatic fashion."⁴⁸

But work is the crux of the matter not just for bi-vocational pastors but also for all Christians. Timothy Keller contributes to this reality in his helpful book, *Every Good Endeavor*, in which he begins by quoting from Robert Bellah's *Habits of the Heart* and

⁴⁶. Tom Nelson, *Work Matters: Connecting Sunday Worship in Monday Work* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011).

⁴⁷. Nelson, *Work Matters*, 28.

⁴⁸. Nelson, *Work Matters*, 30.

then paraphrases him: “One of the hopes for our unraveling society is the recovery of the idea that all human work is not merely a job but a calling.”⁴⁹ If the vast majority of Christians are not employed in church-paid work and the church trains members to work for the Lord only in volunteer ministry in the church, then we are not training people to be effective where they spend most of their time.

Michael Greene, speaking at the 2010 Lausanne Conference, commented on the importance of preparing people to view their work as ministry:

The key missing piece is work. People spend most of their time working, once you add up the activities in the home, in the workplace, and elsewhere. If we do not teach people to view their work, and the whole economic sphere of activity, as integral to the way God wants them to live, Christianity is reduced from a full-time way of life to nothing more than a leisure time activity. Our walk with Jesus becomes something we squeeze into our schedules when we are not working.⁵⁰

Employment, whether one, two or more places of work influence who we are and how we function in the world known as bi-vocational pastoring. Bi-vocational pastors have a unique contribution to make to the pastoral ministry because they work in the world (typically, secular) as well as the church and can reflect to the person in the pew that bi-vocational pastors understand their work a day world. Bi-vocational pastors work in the marketplace and are not removed the real world but immersed in it. This can be an advantage if bi-vocational pastors embrace their calling and a theology of work that claims all work as having purpose and meaning in God’s economy.

⁴⁹. Timothy Keller, *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God’s Work* (New York, NY: Riverhead Books, 2012), 2.

⁵⁰. Drew Cleveland and Greg Forester, “What Are People Made For?”, in *The Pastor’s Guide to Fruitful Work and Economic Wisdom*, ed. Drew Cleveland and Greg Forester (Grand Rapids, MI: Made to Flourish: Kern Family Foundation, 2012), 7.

Bi-Vocational Pastors' Preaching Strategies

This final section will review the literature on the craft of biblical expository sermon-making by bi-vocational pastors and how a strategic approach can assist them in keeping the Word of God central in the ministry of the church. Comparatively little has been written on this topic. Bi-vocational pastoring is a strange and wonderful calling of working two or more jobs while obeying the calling of God to build his church while supporting one's self financially. A strategy for preaching can only help. Scott Gibson's *Preaching with a Plan*,⁵¹ is one work that provides a process for developing a preaching plan that allows the pastor to go from theory to practice. Yet, its target audience is full-time pastors.

Each Sunday's arrival is consistently on time and often quicker than an expository preacher would like, especially when attempting to balance all the needs of home, marriage, a second job, and the church. And so, the demands of time and energy on a bi-vocational pastor can sap the preacher's energy, creativity, and love. This reality combined with the truth that we live in a society that values self-indulgence and entertainment and these factors can minimize time spent in weekly sermon preparation. But if we consider these cultural tendencies in light of 2 Tim 2:15, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth," the call to be workmen who rightly handle the word of truth must trump any distractions that diminish our calling. The apostle Paul exhorted Timothy to study the Scriptures so that he need not be ashamed and in order to correctly handle them. So, what does that mean for those who are expected to preach

⁵¹. Scott Gibson, *Preaching with a Plan* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012).

most Sundays?⁵² As disciples of Jesus we must discipline ourselves to study and know the Scriptures! We must joyfully study, pray, and work to be approved by God with our best effort. But what about a strategy that can guide us to that end?

Any strategy must have a purpose or, as the old saying goes, “If you aim at nothing you will hit it every time.” Accordingly, the strategic approach that accounts for the way bi-vocational pastors’ ministries are different and how they can go from the study to the pulpit can help provide a sharper aim at the target of producing fine expository sermons. I currently know of no existing preaching strategies for bi-vocational expositors but only works that addresses preaching strategies for full-time pastors. Lynn Shertzer’s “Teaching Preaching to Bi-vocational Pastors in the Mennonite Church”⁵³ aims at teaching the craft of preaching to Mennonite bi-vocational pastors who have little formal training in preaching and minimal college education but preach either regularly or occasionally. His contribution recognizes the uncertainties of bi-vocational ministry and the challenges of time, lack of resources, and the overwhelming forest of information on preaching that is daunting for beginners.⁵⁴ Yet, Shertzer does not offer a comprehensive strategy on how to keep expository sermons central in the church. His goal is to teach the elements of preaching to beginners. My focus is on identifying obstacles and developing a way to overcome them for expositors with all levels of education and experience. Most pastors have experienced the panic and stress of having a week that is filled with the usual functions of administration, counseling, Christian education, and discipling, as

⁵² Gary G. Hoag, “What God’s Workers Should Do,” Christian Leadership Alliance, November 11, 2015, accessed April 22, 2017, <http://blog.christianleadershipalliance.org/2015/11/11/what-gods-workers-should-do-Gary-Hoag/>.

⁵³ W. Lynn Shertzer, “Teaching Preaching to Bi-Vocational Pastors in the Mennonite Church,” DMin thesis-project, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA, 2009.

⁵⁴ Shertzer, “Teaching Preaching,” I.

well as emergencies and family trials. But add a funeral, an extra service, a Vacation Bible School, a crisis here or there, the demands of a second job, and preaching preparation quickly gets short shrift. Common survival strategies are important. For example, when I asked a Ph.D. in New Testament what he would do to develop a preaching strategy if he were bi-vocational preaching pastor, his strategy was simple: “Get a team of elders around him who can preach and that way you won’t burn out.” This may be an essential element in any preaching strategy because burnout is a real danger in many of the helping professions, including the pastorate. While a team approach is not always possible, especially early in the pastoral context. I will advocate for a more comprehensive strategy to ensure quality expository sermons for the nurture of the church.

Conclusion

A preaching strategy for bi-vocational expository preaching pastors seeks to fold the richness and scriptural authority of expository preaching into the unique ministry of bi-vocational pastoring. The literature abundantly addresses preaching, as well as expository preaching, and its value to the church, while bi-vocational pastoring is to a much less degree extant in the literature. And strategies that identify and merge the two are unknown. It is the intent of chapter 4 to devise just such a strategy to begin to recognize the need as well as offer a tool to help keep expository preaching central in the life of the church. The goal of this applied thesis-project will be to develop a comprehensive Bi-vocational Preaching Strategy Tool (BPST) that will generate data for

the crafting of a preaching strategy that will enhance quality sermon preparation by the bi-vocational pastor and add to the literature in the field of homiletics.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT DESIGN

This project is based on the theological and pragmatic groundwork of the previous chapters that shows that expository sermon preparation by bi-vocational pastors requires more than having good executive functioning skills and time management abilities but calls for a comprehensive strategy for expository sermon preparation and delivery. The challenges faced by bi-vocational pastors are different than other pastors, and this project hopes to meet a need by assisting them in identifying obstacles in expository sermon preparation. The goal is keeping the preaching of the Word of God central in their ministry while not neglecting other important areas of life and ministry. I hope that providing a Bi-vocational Preaching Strategy Tool (BPST) that can be administered either individually or by a team (with a mentor or a leadership team) will result in a strategy that is both generally prescriptive but also customized, thus allowing discussion, feedback, and the creating of a practical strategy that can be implemented to improve the consistency and quality of expository sermons.

Bi-vocational expository preachers committed to keeping the Word of God central in their ministry face demands that are unique. To optimize their preaching craft, I believe that a strategy that identifies obstacles in sermon preparation as well as designs a preaching strategy to overcome them can be of great help. To show that this need exists and offer a help to bi-vocational expository preachers and the church at large my project followed four steps:

- I. Articulating the Need for a Bi-vocational Preaching Strategy
- II. Surveying the Need for a Preaching Strategy

- III. Development of a Bi-Vocational Preaching Strategy Tool (BPST)
- IV. Field Testing the Bi-vocational Preaching Strategy Tool.

Articulating the Need for a Bi-Vocational Preaching Strategy

This project began with the development of a survey to test the need for a preaching strategy that could help anchor the preaching ministry of bi-vocational pastors against forces that can thwart their stewardship of the Word of God. The survey was constructed beginning with the perceived, as well as recognized, challenges in bi-vocational pastoral ministry. Commonly known challenges to pastors were at the core of the survey with the goal of testing their validity among current bi-vocational pastors to refine the survey. There are an increasing number of books and articles on bi-vocational ministry but comparatively few that specifically address bi-vocational preaching. So, the survey was an attempt to engage pastors currently in bi-vocational ministry and identify their challenges and collect and quantify their experiences as it relates to preaching. Eleven identified challenge areas were addressed in the original survey. The participants were encouraged to identify only the areas where they met challenges to their preaching craft. Ninety-three surveys were sent electronically and by mail to pastors in nine states. I identified these pastors through denominational leaders in the Christian Missionary Alliance (C. & M.A.), Conservative Congregational Conference of Churches (C.C.C.C.), Southern Baptist Churches (S.B.C.), and American Baptist Churches (A.B.C.) or by asking pastors I know if they knew any bi-vocational pastors. Working with the denominational executives often took time for trust to develop so that they would be willing to help my research. It was not unusual for them to be unaware of which pastors were bi-vocational in their area, and so I was often referred to another leader or pastor

who they thought might be able to help me locate bi-vocational pastors. The process was not linear. Initial survey attempts using Survey Monkey had an extremely low response rate of 2 percent but a combination introductory e-mail and a subsequent snail mailer of the survey with self-addressed stamped envelopes yielded a respectable 25.8 percent response rate (24 out of 93). Locating a bi-vocational pastor and the likelihood of a reply was increased if I was referred to the pastor by someone who would vouch for me and the research I was doing.

Surveying the Need for a Preaching Strategy

The survey (see Appendix) I developed using a Likert scale asked participants to identify the challenges they currently face in expository sermon preparation with up to four possible responses for each question. The 23 respondents' answers produced for me a profile of bi-vocational pastors' preaching challenges:

1. Educational levels:

- Bachelors (12)
- Master of Arts (3)
- MDiv (7)
- Doctoral (2)

Thus, my pool of respondents was about 50 percent bachelor's degree and 50 percent master's degree or above.

2. Number of jobs worked weekly:

- two jobs (19)
- three or more jobs (4)

3. Major areas of stress in life:
 - ministry setting (5)
 - marriage and family (3)
 - financial (6), physical health (1)
 - other stressors (6) including spiritual warfare, combination of finances and family, secular job, and undefined stress
4. Primary type of sermon preached:
 - expository (18)
 - topical or textual (4)
 - not sure (2)
5. Amount of time spent in sermon preparation:
 - 5-10 hrs. (6)
 - 10-15 hrs. (5)
 - 15-20 hrs. (9)
 - 20+ hrs. (1)
6. Are you the primary preacher at your church:
 - yes (18)
 - no (5)
 - rotate with team (3)
7. Your greatest challenge in developing expository sermons:
 - exegesis (2)
 - theology (0)
 - finding the main idea of the text (3)

- application (9)
 - delivery (3)
 - time to internalize the text (2)
 - other (4)
8. Rank up to four challenges for sermon preparation:
- time (18)
 - study distractions (1)
 - technology (1)
 - combination of several things (2)
9. The quality of your preaching is affected most by:
- whether I start preparing early enough (2)
 - spiritual preparation (6)
 - study time (6)
 - preaching more regularly will help me (1)
 - time to practice my delivery (1)
 - need for more training (1)
 - uninterrupted preparation time (1)
 - sleep (1)
 - time demands of ministry and family (1)
 - connecting with the congregation during the sermon (1)
 - emotional challenges of the week (1)

10. Are you satisfied with your preaching (This question aimed at the pastors' overall satisfaction with their preaching. This question became #2 in the strategy tool):

- I agree (19) agree
- I strongly agree (1)
- I disagree (3)

Satisfaction with their preaching was not necessarily an indication of their efficiency, stress levels, or lack of challenges in their preaching ministry. I will develop this thought further in chapter 5.

11. Have you developed a strategy to guard and maximize your sermon preparation:

- No, it is different each week (3)
- Yes, it is successful (12)
- It doesn't work consistently (5)
- I have not been successful in developing a consistent strategy (3)

Half of the survey respondents found that their current sermon preparation strategy was working for them (12 out of 23) and thus may have not felt the need to adapt or change their approach. The survey results, particularly question #7 (Greatest challenges in developing expository sermons), question #8 (Rank up to four challenges to sermon preparation), and question # 9 (The quality of your preaching is most affected by) show that time is the major challenge in sermon preparation for bi-vocational pastors.

Yet, how pastors felt the time crunch varied:

- finding time to study

- time to pray
- having quiet time to internalizing the text

Bi-vocational pastors who said they have a sermon preparation strategy that was successful (about 55 percent) still contend with stressors and challenges in ministry that impact their sermon preparation as noted in answers to question # 3 (Major areas of stress in life). And 45 percent are not satisfied. The level of satisfaction with their sermons measured by question # 10 (19 of 24 respondents strongly agreed they were satisfied with the quality of their sermons) does not imply that challenges are absent; in fact, the pastors' challenges seemed to be part of their week-to-week struggles they must overcome to preach well as seen by their responses to question # 3. In question # 3, 66 percent of the pastors rated either their ministry setting (5), marriage and family (3), or finances (6) as stressors. These responses helped me refine the self-assessment questions and suggested recommendations that would be incorporated into the final strategy tool.

The pastors' time limitations, various stressors and the need for a strategy were evidenced by almost 50 percent of the survey respondents to question # 10 (11 out of 23) saying they were less than satisfied with their sermon preparation strategy. Their additional comments that came after question # 10 (Are you satisfied with your preaching?) showed more specific challenges that they are laboring under:

- "I took a vacation and determined that I would not feel guilty."
- "My prep. time is often broken up and I *often* don't have time to allow thoughts to gel and for outlines to come together better. I am forced to 'run with' what I have when I sense it could be better."

- “Lack of time and a difficult schedule. I cannot sermon prep. until Friday and Saturday so I lack time to internalize the text.”
- “The emotional challenges of the week are my biggest challenge.”
- “Uninterrupted study time is often hard to schedule.”
- “Adequate sleep and clarity of mind.”
- “The amount of time I have to prepare.”

These additional comments helped me improve the survey and the tool.

Development of a Bi-Vocational Preaching Strategy Tool (BPST)

The 24 respondents helped clarify the various challenges faced by bi-vocational pastors. Consequently, I revised my survey from eleven to ten questions to eliminate redundancy and in the tool the questions followed a progression beginning with *analyze* (questions 1, 2, and 3) followed by *plan and design* (questions 4 through 10). Part II is the *implement* section of the tool where respondents design their strategy to overcome identified obstacles based on their self-assessment recommendations from section I.

After answering the tools assessment questions, the participant was presented with a set of suggested recommendations after each question to assist them with ways to overcome their identified challenges (*Plan and Design*). The suggested recommendations were prescribed based on the author’s familiarity with the general body of homiletical and pastoral literature. Additionally, each question had a custom recommendation to be designed in consultation with a mentor, ecclesiastical supervisor, or leadership team. This custom recommendation would be individually tailored to the setting, skill, and needs of the preacher. The simple flow of the tool was to move from analysis to planning and

design to identify obstacles to expository sermon prep and finally to the implementation of a strategy to overcome those challenges. Through informal feedback most participants said they understood the survey and found it easy to use.

Field Testing the Bi-vocational Preaching Strategy Tool

To field test the BPST I attended the annual gathering of the Conservative Conference of Congregational Churches (C.C.C.C.) at Gordon College on July 25 and 26, 2018. At the gathering I recruited 10 bi-vocational pastors and gave them the option to meet with me to test the tool (self-administer) and then have a face-to-face consultation with me. Six agreed to meet and use the tool in person and receive consultation. The other 4 bi-vocational pastors agreed to use the tool after the conference asking that it be sent to them electronically with an option of phone or skype consults. I sent it to all 4, and two responded. So, in total 8 self-administered the tool and 6 of the 8 met for a personal consultation. The average time it took to self-administer the tool was approximately 15 to 20 minutes. The length of individual consultations I provided lasted from 45 minutes to 1.25 hours. Of interest was the great diversity of second jobs held by these 10 bi-vocational pastors. Their occupations included:

- 1 attorney
- 2 teachers
- 1 salesman at a gun shop
- 1 business owner
- 1 plumber
- 1 mental health clinician
- 2 chaplains (military)

- 1 auto mechanic

Each had unique stories about the flexibility or the inflexibility of their second job (in some cases 3 jobs) and whether they had benefits (especially sick and vacation time), as well as the financial profile of their combined family incomes. Some spouses were employed (all were married men), and the financial pressures they were facing were discussed. The most significant financial pressures noted were the cost of college for their children (2 respondents) and the cancer treatments of 1 pastor's wife who subsequently had to stop working, thus causing a loss of income and adding the high costs of health care debt. The financial pressures of living in New England and the Northeastern United States was another issue. All 8 pastors were from New England or New York State. Five were from Massachusetts, where housing and the cost of living is among the highest in the US. These factors necessitated a second job for all the pastors pastoring established or church plants.

Below are the top identified challenges of the 8 respondents and what questions they were responding to and the suggested recommendations they chose. I have also noted the custom recommendations we developed during individual consultations which combined with the suggested recommendations would be used to develop their preaching strategy:

- Question #6: "The major area of stress in my life is." Their answer-choices were:
 - 2 selected ministry setting
 - 1 identified financial stress
 - 1 selected health

- Question # 7 was the top challenge for 1 pastor. The question is: “Are you the primary preacher at your church?” The respondent said “yes.”
 - To meet that challenge, he suggested that he take his allotted vacation as well as refresh more often through a study leave.
- Question # 8 also had 1 respondent. The question reads; “What amount of time do you typically use to prepare a sermon:”
 - 5-10 hours
 - 2 10-15 hours
 - 3-15-20 hours
 - 4 more than 20 hours

The suggested recommendation selected was to remove one activity in his routine to create more study time. The pastor said he would limit his social media activity and get his kids to bed on time.

- Question # 9 was 1 respondent’s choice. The question reads as follows: “Do you primarily prepare expository sermons as opposed to topical and textual sermons?” The respondent’s suggested recommendation was to work on his technical skills using feedback from Sermon RX and attend a Preachers College. His custom recommendation was to read Randal Pelton’s *Preaching with Accuracy*.

In each of the top challenges identified by the respondents (listed above), the common challenges were time and stress and how they impacted sermon preparation. The individual consultations indicated how much more could have been discussed and planned had I planned accordingly. The opportunity to track each pastor’s

implementation process would have provided a crucial follow-up component that I will discuss in chapter 5.

Overall, the field testing validated the need for a preaching strategy with only 1 survey participant giving negative feedback about the tool's value during the consultation. His objection was based on his opposition to expository preaching and inductive sermons. After the initial field test at the C.C.C.C. annual gathering, I feel confident that the project can provide an opportunity to bi-vocational pastors to assess their challenges and gain needed support in consultation with others to overcome barriers in their preaching preparation. The interest and engagement level of each pastor I met with was indicated by the fact that several of them missed meals with friends, family, and co-workers to meet with me. Several others planned before the conference to meet with me and gave of their time generously. Additionally, the level of engagement with the self-assessment tool opened the door to discussing preaching in general and how it relates to the needs of their congregation and their pulpit ministry. The 6 individual consultations left me with a sense of connection with fellow bi-vocational pastors. It was a humbling experience being allowed into the lives and ministry of these servants who were profoundly committed to pastoral ministry. I was grateful for the opportunity to discuss bi-vocational preaching and their passion to keep the Word of God central in their ministry.

In chapter 5 I will review the results of the field test and future practices including how the Bi-vocational Preaching Strategy Tool (BPST) can be further refined and used on a broader scale to benefit the church at large.

CHAPTER 5

OUTCOMES (CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS)

The purpose of this thesis-project has been to champion the need for individualized preaching strategies for bi-vocational pastors that will identify obstacles in expository sermon preparation and overcome them with a personal improvement plan. In God's loving wisdom He has determined to use the foolishness of preaching to bring His great message of salvation to the world. Bi-vocational pastors since the apostle Paul have been engaged in tentmaking ministry to support the proclamation of the gospel. However, contemporary western bi-vocational pastors who preach expository sermons face challenges that the apostle Paul could not have imagined, obstacles that can quickly cause pull and drift on their ministries. My thesis-project was aimed at helping preaching pastors to keep the Word of God central in their ministry by assisting them with a strategy that will help create consistently faithful expository sermons as they move from study to pulpit. This chapter reflects on what I have learned and has three parts: analysis of the project, discussion of outcomes, and recommendations for future practice.

Analysis of the Project

I began my project with a survey of bi-vocational pastors to assess the need for bi-vocational preaching strategy that was both easy to take and practical to implement. The development of my survey went through several phases in order to design a tool geared toward the unique aspects of expository preaching. The survey was sent to 93 pastors in nine states representing 4 denominations nationwide. Locating the bi-vocational pastors

proved much more difficult than anticipated, taking months of steady persistence. Initial attempts using Survey Monkey, an electronic survey service, proved inept with a very low response rate of 2 percent. However, thanks to the help of several key denominational executives and their assistants, I was able to send surveys via e-mail and snail mail to the identified pastors. The overall experience of surveying bi-vocational pastors showed that identifying these pastors is a complex endeavor. Only a few denominational leaders were aware of the pastors in their ranks who are bi-vocational. While awareness varied from district to district, overall, it made finding bi-vocational pastors tedious. Locating and eliciting a response was more successful when requests were accompanied by an endorsement from an ecclesiastical leader or fellow pastor.

Surveys were collected from 25 percent of my contacts, and the results were used to space, refine, and clarify the survey. Revisions included reducing the length of the survey from 11 to 10 questions and using pastors' feedback, comments, and questions to lend clarity and shape to the final tool. The final product was then incorporated into the analysis section of the Bi-vocational Preaching Strategy Tool (BPST). Overall, the respondents' surveys left me confident that most of the bi-vocational pastors I contacted had unique experiences and needs that differ significantly from fully-funded pastors in their preparation and delivery of sermons. Even those satisfied with their preaching were still impacted by the demands of a second job and the stress produced by time limitations. Many of the pastors indicated they had a successful strategy but still worked in the face of ongoing challenges. Analysis of the data bore this out showing a composite of answers indicating a struggle with time demands while articulating the various nuances of those challenges that impact their sermon preparation. The pastors' self-assessments of their

sermon craft using the BPST showed varied and nuanced time limitations that they face during their weekly ministry of expository preaching.

The respondents to the survey (24) and the pastors who self-administered the BPST (10) were all very engaged participants. Only one negative interaction occurred during the entire process. Overall the project was in my estimation successful in that it showed a great willingness by pastors to analyze, discuss, and then implement a new or improved strategy that could help their preaching. I believe this project proved that a need exists for a preaching strategy among bi-vocational pastors that can be further delineated with more in-depth research.

Discussion of Outcomes

The ministry of many bi-vocational pastors is a balancing act with little margin for error. The demands of a second, or in some cases a third job, can easily make quality sermon preparation time seem elusive. None of the pastors I surveyed or met for individual consultations expressed that time was not a factor in their day-to-day ministry. It was simply a given. All seemed to understand that time had to be leveraged in order to maximize their efficiency in ministry and particularly sermon preparation.

Today, there is an increasing number of resources, literature, and awareness of bi-vocational pastors and their needs, but additional support, research, and discussion are needed. In that vein I have four observations and related questions to offer based on my project's outcomes.

First, do all preachers have a strategy? I did not ask the pastors to divulge their current approach to sermon preparation or articulate their homiletical strategy. But I wonder how many preaching pastors can explain the model they use for sermon prep and

delivery? The outcomes seem to suggest that many have an approach that works for them and they are satisfied with it. But it would have been useful to ask this question for no other reason than that the outcomes showed how time can become a task master for these pastors. And so, the question remains, does that impact their approach and how they begin, proceed, and finish their sermon? In other words, are they able to consistently apply their current strategy?

Second, can the strategy they use be improved upon? I believe every preacher meets challenges in sermon work as it is hard, holy work. But my research showed that the majority of pastors were satisfied with their sermon craft, and they participated willingly and discussed their struggles and successes openly with a total stranger. There seemed to be a hunger to do that, perhaps because the tool opened discussion on an important kingdom value: preaching.

Third, I believe the tool is best suited for use in consultation with others. During the field-testing all participants engaged in discussion and strategizing not afforded to the participants who simply self-administered the tool without consultation. This left me with the belief that consultation is needed to maximize the benefit of the tool. Individual assessment has value, particularly for reflection purposes, but the best use of the tool occurs when it is used in consultation. Team consultation may afford the greatest benefit to pastors by helping plan an implementation strategy and mark progress through coaching and accountability.

Lastly, time is of such a premium in bi-vocational ministry that pastors need good executive functioning skills to cope. The second and third jobs of these pastors proved to be very diverse, adding another variable that needs examination. Some second jobs are

ideal in terms of schedules and flexibility while others add stress due to the rigidity of their milieu despite any financial benefit, begging the question, “Is this the best second job for me?”

Recommendations for Future Practice

This project was an attempt to support bi-vocational pastors in their preaching of expository sermons. I believe expository preaching is the best way to help congregations grow spiritually, and while not all pastors are committed to expository preaching those who are typically require more time to produce sermons than do pastors who preach topically. Bi-vocational pastors have less time than fully-funded pastors, and with that in mind this project has offered an approach that will aid them in sermon development geared specifically to their time limitations. Someone once said, *write what you know*. I know what it means to be bi-vocational, and my sixteen years of bi-vocational pastoral experience has motivated me to help others who may be on a similar journey. I learned from my mistakes as well as from strategizing with the BPST to improve my preaching and ministry. Taking the BPST will not add time to the pastor’s week, but it may lead to discussion that can identify obstacles and improve the pastor’s efficiency, reduce stress, and hone homiletical discipline.

Bi-vocational pastors are a unique breed of pastor ministering as church planters, church revitalizers, and interims each tasked with preaching God’s Word on a regular basis. My project was created in the hope of producing sermons that will not return void. Whether I have succeeded is yet to be seen, but I have learned some things which can help me toward that goal of faithful expository preaching.

My research on bi-vocational preaching was only a beginning. As I progressed through a myriad of questions and developed a survey and then a strategy tool, many issues surfaced that remain unexplored. Among them and related to the broader issue of pastoring is the pastor's compatibility with bi-vocational ministry. This is not directly related to preaching but asks the crucial question, "Am I cut out for this type of ministry?" My assumption and experience have informally shown that to count the cost before entering bi-vocational ministry is wise. Some denominations offer church planting schools that may or may not include assessment of skill types needed for church planting. But what about bi-vocational pastoring? We need similar assessment that will help evaluate compatibility for bi-vocational ministry including an initial consultation with ecclesiastical superiors, family, and mentors to discern the calling.

Future practice recommendations for this project are four in nature: First, and directly related to the BPST for a future revision of the tool, is the question, "Can bi-vocational pastors articulate the approach they use for sermon development?" Can they state it (write it out) clearly? And what criteria did they use to decide on that approach (i.e., what I learned in seminary, read, or learned from my pastor)? After my research was completed, I contacted one participant and asked him to articulate his sermon development process from study to pulpit.

He was able to articulate with bullet points:

- ☐ Series, Scripture, and main point determined 3-9 months ahead of time with the help of a creative team
- ☐ Two weeks before, read the text devotionally and start jotting down personal reflections

- ☐ Early week of – listen to several sermons on the same passage or topic on the web
- ☐ Develop an outline of points supporting the main point
- ☐ Read commentaries and biblical support tools to confirm and supplement text
- ☐ Write sermon and PowerPoint™
- ☐ Saturday and Sunday AM final prep of preaching and editing sermon
- ☐ Preach it

In hindsight I believe including this question in the tool would help establish a baseline of the pastor's current homiletical practice that could be used in future consultations. Establishing a reference point for the method they use would provide a point of re-examination in discussion with a mentor. Challenges, struggles, and needs might become clearer allowing the pastor to customize a preaching strategy. This participant is also a doctoral student and has a well thought out approach to sermon craft but admittedly still has challenges and obstacles.

Second, examining the attitude of the pastor toward their second (or third) job should be included in the tool. Is the ultimate goal to be a fully-funded pastor and leave bi-vocational ministry? I did not collect any data on that question, but it is directly related to the pastor's theology of work. How do the attitudes of the pastor toward the second job square with Col 3:17: "And, whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him"?

Third, comparing surveys and consultations, I concluded that pastors can benefit the most from self-administering the tool and then having a consultation with their supervisor, mentor, or team of congregational leaders. One caveat is that the consultation

should be done in concert with a knowledgeable mentor or supervisor. By “knowledgeable” I am supposing a person who has both pastoral experience as well as a commitment to expository preaching. In each of the 6 field tested consultations the potential benefits were self-evident including personalized feedback, exploration of their ministry context, follow-up questions, and discussion of specific challenges, as well as the clarifying and revisiting assumptions about their preaching. Forty-five minutes to one and a half hour of consultation and reflection helped identify the major obstacles and devise the custom strategy by opening the conversation to counsel, problem solving, and support. Consultation also provides the potential for long-term follow-up and accountability of the implemented strategy.

Conclusion

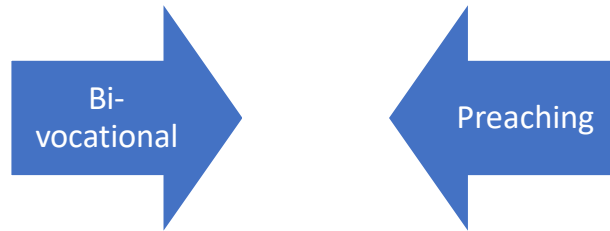
This project was a captivating endeavor in that it helped me catch a glimpse of how much can be done to support and aid bi-vocational pastors and their preaching ministry. The 6 pastors I consulted with in person gave me a sense of being their comrade in arms and part of a fellowship where we speak each other’s language (bi-vocationalise?). Those consultations were affirming and encouraging as I saw their level of commitment to their churches and the preaching of the gospel. It was fascinating to learn what they did for their second vocations and how they gave as much effort there as they did to their pastoral duties but how singularly important preaching is to them. Without the ability to follow up after they developed and implemented their strategies it is hard to see if any significant impact was made in their preaching ministry. It is my hope that I might be able to refine and test the BPST again at a pastors’ or

denominational conference working to track how the BPST impacts the expository preaching of pastors for the long run for the glory of God.

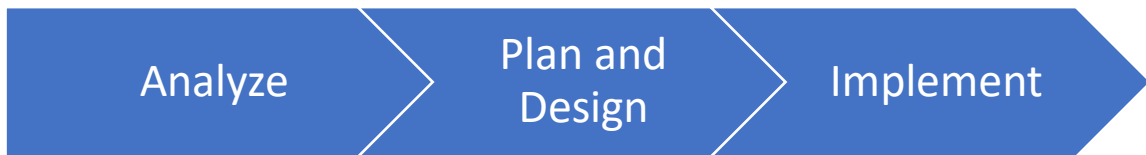
Today, the call to be a bi-vocational pastor is being re-envisioned beyond the conventional approach based primarily on the budget of the church, stagnation, and survival. Traditionally, when a church was unable to pay a full-time pastor, a young inexperienced or retired experienced pastor was hired to fill the pulpit. While practical, this model is often minimalistic, lacking a view of marketplace ministry and mission that is healthy. Today, bi-vocational pastors working in the marketplace and committed to expository preaching desire to nurture, grow, and deepen the faith of their members by keeping the Word of God central in their ministry. These expositors face challenges of time and resources that can benefit from a strategy that will improve their readiness to preach captured by the first tentmaker Paul who in his charge to Timothy said, “Preach the Word; be ready in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and careful instruction.”

APPENDIX

BI-VOCATIONAL PREACHING STRATEGY TOOL (BPST): PREPARING TO KEEP EXPOSITORY PREACHING CENTRAL IN YOUR MINISTRY



Bi-vocational Preaching Strategy Tool



What is the Bi-vocational Preaching Strategy Tool (BPST)?

It is a self-analysis tool for the bi-vocational preaching pastor aimed at identifying obstacles in expository sermon preparation and then developing a strategy to overcome those challenges. The goal being to keep the Word of God central in your ministry.

Why do I need a strategy for preaching?

If you are a pastor, you are busy, and if you are bi-vocational you have the added responsibility of a second job(s). Add the already important time commitments to family, finances and pastoral duties and it can become easy for sermon preparation to be pushed to the bottom of the list.

Do you have a plan, a strategy, that addresses the unique challenges you face in your ministry and allows you to keep the preaching ministry a top priority in your ministry?

This tool is designed to be used by the individual preacher or in concert with a mentor/coach and/or in the group ministry context of a preaching team or denominational leader.

The tool seeks to analyze your ministry setting, expository skills and the overall stewardship of your preaching ministry. Given the frequency we preach and the importance of the task it is important to consider how we are doing and if there are things

we need to do for maximum fruitfulness. The BPST is designed to help you be a faithful steward of the Word!

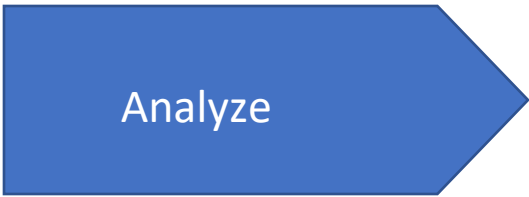
For more information or an individual consultation contact John G. Mulvihill at jgmulvihill@hotmail.com or (978) 998-0296.

Instructions

The tool consists of two parts. Begin the tool by answering all questions in Part I. Most of the questions will provide you with suggested recommendations (supplied) and custom recommendations (ones you develop in consultation). Custom recommendations are developed with your mentor/support team and will take time, discussion, and work to come up with customized recommendation(s) that can be applied to your ministry context.

Once you have selected the suggested and custom recommendations for each question you will list them on the final page (Part II) in the form of action steps. The recommendations will be your preaching strategy action steps ready for implementation. Be sure to designate your start and finish target dates.

Note: Questions #1, 2, and 3 are for self-clarification purposes and to help you establish a starting point for your current baseline as you proceed through the tools questions. Question # 4 does not provide any suggested recommendations because it calls only for custom recommendation(s) developed by you and your mentor/team member(s). Once developed, your Bi-vocational Preaching Strategy can help bring about needed change and greater stewardship of the Word of God in your expository preaching. Your strategy can be revisited for personal and/or corporate follow-up on your progress.



Identifying the Challenges to Sermon Preparation

Please circle the number in each question (or add comments) that reflect your response. Note: questions 1, 2 and, 3 are meant to help you analyze your current performance and satisfaction level and as you begin to analyze your current approach to sermon preparation by answering questions 4-10.

Question # 1: If you preach primarily expository sermons what is your greatest challenge?

Question # 2: Are you satisfied with your preaching?

1. I agree	2. I strongly agree	3. I disagree	4. I strongly disagree

Question # 3: Do you have a current strategy for sermon preparation?

1. No, my strategy is different each week.	2. Yes, my strategy is successful.	3. My strategies don't seem to work consistently.	4. I have not been successful in finding a strategy.
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You may currently have a conscious or unconscious strategy for sermon development (addressed in questions 1, 2, and 3), but what can be done to develop or improve upon your approach? Questions 4-10 will help you identify barriers and craft a new or improved strategy for expository sermon preparation.

Plan and Design

Question # 4: What is your highest earned degree related to pastoral ministry?

1. Bachelor's degree	2. Master of Arts	3. Master of Divinity	4. Doctoral degree
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If your education is a perceived challenge you want to improve consider the following:

Suggested Recommendations

If you have not received training in expository preaching including the original languages, theology, or preaching classes consider:

- Attending Preachers College at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (GCTS) (short-term intensive)
- Conferences on preaching such as Saddleback Church, Gospel Coalition, Moody's Preaching Conference or GCTS's National Preaching Conference.
- Meet with a mentor to discuss and pray about options.
- Investigate educational programs with strong preaching components.
- Investigate scholarship, grants, and denominational and church support opportunities from full-time to part-time study including online aspects.

Custom Recommendations

- Discuss your need and desire for additional education with a mentor or church leader(s) and ask for their help and discernment.
- Identify options and investigate the possibilities (i.e., visit websites, schools).
- Consider the prescription strategy above as you seek guidance and direction.
- Realize this maybe a process not a single event.

What are the recommendations in your action plan (suggested and custom)?

- 1.
- 2.

Question # 5: The number of employment positions (jobs) you currently hold.

1. Two jobs that total 40 hrs. per week	2. Three jobs that total 40 hrs. per week	3. Two jobs that total more than 40 hrs. per week	4. More than two jobs that total more than 40 hrs. per week
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If your job(s) are perceived as a challenge, consider the following related strategies:

Suggested Recommendations

- Does your work allow for a Sabbath? Consider and evaluate this need in your life.
- What are the costs/benefits of the non-pastoral job(s) you currently have?
Including travel time, personal fulfillment, vacation and sick time benefits?
- Are there other job possibilities that will increase the benefit to you (sick and vacation benefits, 401(k) retirement plan)?
- Is the work environment healthy, supportive, and productive? Or are there other possibilities you can pursue?
- One advantage of bi-vocational pastoring is the connections made on the second job. Are you making connections and doing work that is bearing fruit?

Custom Recommendations

- There are challenges that come with a second job. Discuss the specifics of your job with a mentor and or your leadership team. Educating them can help them know how to support you.
- Consider asking them to read *Praying for Your Pastor: How Your Prayer Support Is Their Life Support* by Eddie Byun.¹
- Discuss other employment options including using an employment agency or online recruiting company.

What are the steps in your action plan to address this challenge:

- 1.
- 2.

Question # 6: The major stress areas of my life is

¹ Eddie Byun, *Praying for Your Pastor: How Your Prayer Support is Their Life Support*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016).

1. Ministry setting	2. Marriage and family	3. Physical health	4. Financial

Identify the area of life that is stressful and perceived as a challenge. Note: This question does not have prescribed recommendations but supplies questions to provoke discussion when developing suggested recommendations with your team or mentor.

1. Ministry setting lends itself to a combined prescriptive and suggested strategy for ministry settings:

- Identify what is challenging (stressful) about your setting.
- Board relationships? Old issues that linger from the previous pastor?
- Difficult congregational member (s).
- Lack of volunteers.
- Does your work load translate into burn out? Identify and explain {How many times do you preach yearly? Monthly? Do you schedule breaks? Can you develop a preaching team to share the load?
- Study leaves? Sabbatical as part of your employment contract?

2. Marriage and family stressors combined prescribed and suggested recommendations:

- Are household duties a stressor (transportation, commuting, meal prep., shopping, budgeting)? Identify the issues and review the processes you currently have for the delegation and sharing of duties.
- Consider a rule of life like Benedict's Rule for maximum quality and to help focus on the areas that are important to your spouse (if you are married).
- What do you do for fun? Relaxation? Vacations? Sabbath?
- Do you need mentoring or counseling?
- If married do you pray together? Have family devotions?

3. Physical Health

Prescribed suggestions to consider and adopt:

- *Eating well*- Balanced nutrition? Overeating or eating poorly?
- *Moving well*- exercise and stretching?
- *Sleeping well* – rest and relaxation in serene place.
- *Thinking well* – intellectual growth, humor, limiting negative intrusions.

Question # 6 Continued

Questions for Custom Recommendations

- What needs to change?
- Do you need a coach? When was your last physical exam?

Support and structure to implement change?

- Identify and discuss possible plans of action that are reasonable and obtainable.
- Set short -term and long-term goals. There are usually no quick fixes in this area of life, but the benefits are significant.

4. Financial stressors: this is a combination of prescribed and suggested recommendations

- Family household issues (see marriage and family section for areas of stress).
- Do you have an emergency savings account?
- How is your debt level?
- Budgeting for repairs and maintenance of vehicles and high items?
- Medical and life insurances?
- What can you say “no” to or “not now” that would reduce your stress? Cable TV bundle? Style of car? Eating out? Etc.
- Do you give? Do you tithe?
- Balance is much like Wesley’s wisdom: “Make all you can, give all you can, save all you can.” How is your fiscal balance?

What are the steps in your action plan to address this challenge:

- 1.
- 2.

Question # 7: Are you the primary preacher at your church (the pastor who does most of the preaching)?

1. Yes	2. No
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If you answered “yes,” and perceive this as a challenge (stressor) then consider the following recommendations.

Suggested Recommendations

- Plan pulpit breaks based on the frequency of your preaching (to use a baseball pitcher analogy I call it my pitch count and when it is high I need relief). Include guest preachers in the rotation to give yourself a pulpit break. Develop a team of lay preachers/elders to share the preaching load. Plan and take a study leave.

Questions to Develop Custom Recommendations

- Plan a six-month preaching calendar working in breaks, guest preachers, a variety of genres, and New Testament or Old Testament books to feed the congregation and keep you fresh.
- What type of diet does your congregation need? Are you preaching the whole counsel of God and giving them a balanced diet?

- Are you reading or listening to other preachers that you can learn from?
- Have you read and reread the greats; Robinson, Sunukjian, Chappell, Arthurs, Keller, Edwards, Owens, Spurgeon?
- Self- reflection and critical evaluation can be hard but done with a mentor and or an encouraging team can be of great value. So, has anyone “evaluated” your preaching? There are many preaching evaluation tools available.

What are the steps in your action plan to address this challenge:

- 1.
- 2.

Question # 8 – What amount of time do you typically use to prepare a sermon? If you need more preparation time what can you do to create more study space in your schedule?

1. 5-10 hrs.	2. 10-15 hrs.	3. 15-20 hrs.	4. More than 20 hrs.

Consider the time you spend on sermon preparation (from the study to the pulpit) and what remedies can be included in your strategy to create more study time in your schedule:

Suggested Recommendations

- Expository sermons typically require more study than other sermon types. Determine one activity that you can remove from your schedule and use that time for study.

Questions to Develop Custom Recommendations

- Discuss the process and approach to your sermon development with your mentor and or team.
- Is it efficient? Favorable place and time for study? Scheduled-planned time?
- Are there boundaries in place to minimize distractions and interruptions?
- What needs to happen to improve the time, environment and boundaries to protect your sermon work?

What are the steps in your action plan to address this challenge:

- 1.
- 2.

Question # 9: Do you primarily prepare expository sermons as opposed to topical or textual sermons? Expository sermons are sermons where “the main point

of the Biblical text being considered is the main point of the sermon being preached.”²

1. Yes, I	2. I	3. I am
primarily preach expository sermons	primarily preach topical or textual sermons.	not sure.

If your greatest perceived challenge is preaching expository sermons, consider the following strategy:

Suggested Recommendations

- Evaluate your technical skills and educational training in relation to Question # 1 above, using a sermon evaluation service like Sermon RX to help with the technical aspects of expository preaching and evaluate your sermons with a team or mentor.

Custom Recommendations

- Develop an appreciation for expository preaching and a commitment to it by reading Randal Pelton, *Preaching with Greater Accuracy*, to begin a greater discussion with your team or mentor.

What are the steps in your action plan to address this challenge:

1.

². Mark Dever, *Preach: Theology Meets Practice* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2012).

2.

Question # 10: If you preach primarily expository sermons what is your greatest challenge?

1.	2.	3.	4.	5. Delivery
Exegesis	Theology	Finding the main idea of the text?	Application	

Suggested recommendations/ each area above is defined followed by several supplied recommendations to address the challenge:

1. ***Exegesis*** is the grasp of the historical – grammatical truths of the text and the pulling out of the main idea of the passage using all the technical tools including, but not limited to, the original languages to avoid making assumptions and giving exaggerated meaning to the text. This may include but is not limited to diagramming the verses for a sentence flow of the passage, outlining the passage to exposing its meaning more clearly.

- **Prescribed recommendation:** Read *Haddon Robinson's Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* with a focus on chapter 3, "Tools of the Trade." This foundational work can clarify exposition and give a solid overview of its' importance.

2. **Theology** is the reality that God speaks, and His words are the Bible. Words to humanity about our condition, our need and our only hope.

- **Prescribed recommendation:** Read John Stott, *Between Two Worlds; The Challenge of Preaching Today*, especially chapter 3, “Theological Foundations of Preaching.”

3. **Finding the main idea of the text** – Clarity and great accuracy.

- **Prescribed recommendations:** Read Randal E. Pelton, *Preaching with Accuracy; Finding Christ-Centered Big Ideas for Biblical Preaching*, especially chapter 4, “Identifying the Textual Big Idea” (texbi).

4. **Application** – where the rubber meets the road, the applying of the text with urgency so the audience will apply the message to their hearts and heads.

- **Prescribed recommendation:** Read Bryan Chapell’s *Christ-Centered Preaching; Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, principally chapter 8, “The Practice of Application.”

5. **Delivery** – presenting the sermon but always with the audience in mind using different illustrations, vocal, facial expressions and gestures to deliver the message.:

- **Prescribed recommendation:** Read Donald Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching; Proclaiming Truth with Clarity and Relevance*, especially chapter 16, “Deliver with Freedom.”

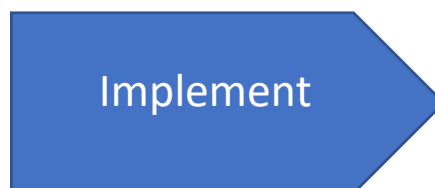
Question # 10 continued:

Custom Recommendations

While the prescribed recommendations are excellent sources, try to develop a reading, listening, and learning plan that exposes you to the technical aspects of sermon preparation especially the area (s) you find most challenging. Do this with your mentor or consultation team for a custom action step.

What are the steps in your action plan to address this challenge:

- 1.
- 2.



Part II: My Bi-Vocational Preaching Strategy

Now that you have completed the Bi-vocational Preaching Strategy Tool assessment (Part I) and have identified barriers that hinder keeping expository preaching central in your ministry use them to make an action plan (Part II). Questions 1, 2, and 3 are more general and for self-reflection and are aimed at helping your mentor/consultation team, as well as yourself, to identify your baseline performance and possibility of improvement.

Concrete action steps are necessary to achieve implementation, minimize the impact of barriers and for overall improvement in crafting expository sermons despite barriers that would hinder you.

1 Identified Barrier (from survey questions 1-11)

Suggested Recommendation: Action step (supplied):

- 1.

Custom Recommendation: Action step (developed in consultation):

- 1.

Time line for implementation and completion. Day and month?

#2 Identified Barrier (from survey questions 1-11):

Suggested Recommendation -Action Step (supplied):

- 1.

Custom Recommendation: Action step (developed in consultation):

1.

Implementation and completion target dates:

Start:_____ Completion:_____

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Ministry

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